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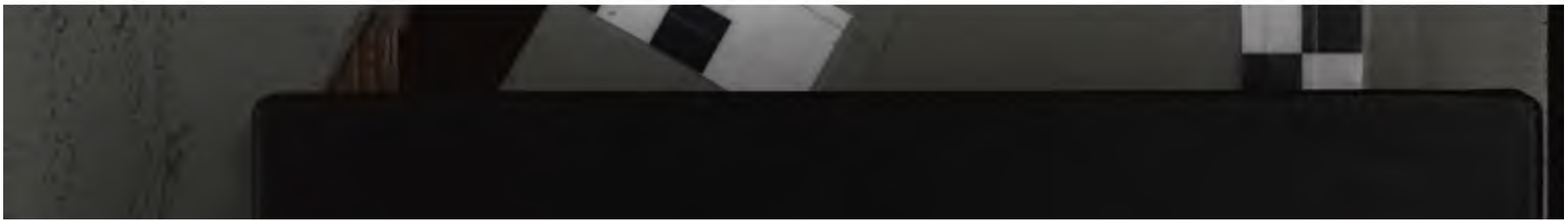

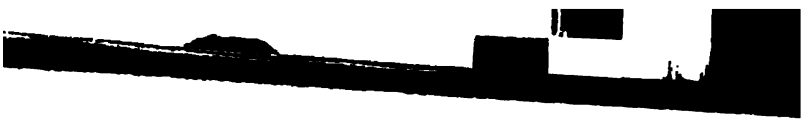

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CHURCH WE FORGET

A Study of the Life and Words of the Early Christians

BY
PHILIP WHITWELL WILSON
Author of "The Christ We Forget," etc.

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PREFACE

IN these pages will be found a character sketch of the disciples who tried to carry out Our Lord's plans for the world. Their story is also full of meaning for people of every time, and especially for us, living as we do amid change and upheaval. I write, not as a theologian, nor as a scholar, but as a layman who owes much to clergy and ministers, and is glad to return the debt. Possibly what I have found in the records will come as a surprise to those critics who consider that Paul lacked appreciation of woman, that John the apostle could not have been John the elder, and that the disciples expected the end of the world next week. All I can say is, that I do not so read the narrative. Moreover, what I have had to describe is the primitive simplicity of Christ's cause. It must not be assumed, therefore, that I am expressing harsh judgments on ministerial orders and ceremonies which have since developed. On these matters I am not competent, even as an amateur, to speak. The object has been, not controversy, but to show the devotion of the disciples to the one Lord, on which we are all, I am sure, fully agreed.

For what we need to-day is, after all, a missionary ardour and effort, a passion for the conquest of men's hearts and affections, an impulse towards

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THE CHURCH WE FORGET

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord:
She is His new creation
By water and the word;
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation
One Lord, one faith, one birth,
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping,
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.

'Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore,
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

—S. J. STONE.

I

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

IN the year of war, 1917, I wrote a book, in which, as a journalist, and not as a theologian, I presented a character study of our Lord, as He appeared to me in the four Gospels which I read in our mother tongue. Despite limitations which were obvious, this book interested people, both in the United States and in Great Britain, and it is now suggested that, still writing confessedly as a journalist only, I should proceed—braving the pitfalls—with a companion picture of the earliest Church,—of the men and women like ourselves who first followed Christ and fought His battles. Here again my paint-box is the Bible and nothing else,—the Acts and the Epistles and the Apocalypse —and my canvas is a page which he who runs may read. I appeal to those who have neither time nor inclination to study commentaries—who cannot go to college to hear lectures by doctors of divinity. I will suppose that you carry in your pocket a New Testament, costing but a few cents, yet clearly printed, in which at odd moments you read a chapter. So let us proceed.

At first sight, you would have said that our resources in men and money were many times

greater than those of the original disciples. We confront the world with hundreds of thousands of clergy and ministers, lay preachers, Sunday-school teachers and missionaries, elders and deaconesses, with organists, choirs and all the camp followers of a great religion. But at Jerusalem the little community which met in the upper room consisted only of one hundred and twenty men, with some women in addition. Of the multitudes who had heard Our Lord speak and received His healing, none save these clung to His cause. Mere words, even His words, which only reached the ear—mere miracles, even His miracles, which only cured the flesh—were not enough to stand the final test. Then as now, more was needed than preaching, however persuasive, and philanthropy, however effective. And we must find out what it was.

Certainly not money! Our churches are endowed with millions; they had scarcely a cent with which to organize a revival, while as for a political establishment, He had by His last words before the Ascension postponed that idea. He would not thus set up His eternal kingdom upon earth. Indeed if you had visited Jerusalem at this time, and had asked for the Christian Church, none would have known what you meant. The disciples, left to themselves, were only Nazarenes,—followers of an obscure Galilean who had been executed as a felon, and it was not until years later, and then at Antioch, many miles distant, that they used the name which hails Him Messiah. At the outset, the Church was not even recognized as a definite society. Outsiders noted those who belonged to Christ merely because they lived in a certain

"way" which differed from the customs of the time. With us, worship is public and conduct is sometimes private. With them it was the other way round—conduct was apparent and worship was concealed behind closed doors. There was an inner life, which God alone watched.

Sometimes we are misled by phrases. When we say that a man is "going into" the Church, we mean that he will be ordained as a clergyman or minister, and in many countries he will wear a special garb or "cloth." Those who were "added to" the early Church assumed no such special uniform—in fact, Paul thought so little of his cloak that he left it behind him at Troas and Timothy had to bring it along to Rome. The brotherhood of saints belonged to laymen as much as to clergy and every one, whatever his ecclesiastical status, could wash his robe and make it white in the blood of the Lamb. In an era of caste, slavery, and bitter oppression, this spiritual citizenship was a model for democracy.

I am one who is helped by symbols, including stained glass windows. But I am endeavouring on this occasion to read my Bible by plain daylight. As a matter of history, men like Peter and women like Dorcas did not wear elaborate vestments or adopt stately poses, or appear under richly carven canopies. On the contrary, Paul was of mean appearance, and his only known gesture was a certain wonderful "beckoning of the hand" which at Antioch in Pisidia captured a synagogue, while in Jerusalem it silenced a mob. James expressly warns us against the respect of persons which picks out the man with the gold ring and the rich

robe; while Timothy was told that the adornment of women should be, not broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety and good works. Church parade, as we call it, was thus discouraged and these people, living amid the luxury and the ostentation of the Roman Empire, avoided advertisement and anticipated by seventeen centuries the black coat with which the Republic of the United States encounters the gilded lace and ribands of European diplomacy.

The Church had its Calendar. Christians observed the Passover and Pentecost. But, with them, every day was a Saint's day. Every day new converts were added to the cause. Every day was a day of salvation. What we call canonization is the reward of a few, a reward long postponed and finally granted by the Vatican. In Jerusalem, an act of God, immediate and decisive, made the Saint, and every such Saint, however humble, must walk worthily of his high calling. I do not say that canonization is wrong—I am not here to decide that—I only state as a fact that it came later. Similarly, while church officers were to be held in high esteem, we do not find that they were greeted with a genuflection or obeisance. At Cæsarea, Peter firmly declined the worship of Cornelius, while at Lystra, when the people would do sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, those evangelists rent their clothes. Such reverence for special leaders was thus another of the practices which, whatever may be our view of it, came later. At the outset, Christ was served by disciples or teachable persons; by evangelists, or persons with news

to tell; by apostles or missionaries, for the word is the same, or selected persons, who were free to go abroad; and by prophets, or persons with insight. All had their appointed task but all reserved homage for the one Master.

Avoiding titles themselves, these people used plain speech to others. Tertullus, the orator, talked in flattering terms about "most noble Felix." To Paul, Felix was simply a judge, as Agrippa was simply a king. Nor did they flatter the mob. It was not a case of "Ladies and Gentlemen" when they spoke, but, short and sharp, "Men of Israel," "Men of Athens," "Men and Brethren." It was manhood that they valued—manhood that they displayed—without prefix or compliment. As God regards men and women, so did they.

The vocabulary of the early Church was thus curiously simple. They talked in monosyllables like love, joy, peace, and were little worried by technical terms which encumber our theology. The creeds were still unwritten, save in the heart. There was as yet no catechism. The only suggestion of a liturgy that I can discover, and it is scarcely a suggestion, is the thanksgiving at Jerusalem when persecution was threatened. Hymns and spiritual songs were sung, but the melody had to be first in the heart,—there were no printed words and music. Nor were there prayer books, only prayer, and no articles of religion had then been drafted, unless we regard as such the circular letter which dealt with various Jewish ordinances. Sometimes we are apt to apply a modern and narrowed meaning to the broad human expressions

which we find in the New Testament. A bishop was not a peer of the realm or prelate, as we put it in England, but an overseer or shepherd, who, as every man ought, looked after the interests of others, rather than his own. When Paul went about "confirming" the Churches, he strengthened them, as we all may do, with helpful words. It was service, rather than ceremony.

And, finally, we must get out of our minds the idea that a church in those days consisted of bricks and mortar. What the apostles meant by a church was not an edifice, with a pulpit and chancel and reredos, but a congregation or society of men and women; built together like living stones; and they were quite content to meet in some upper room, or "a place," or a private dwelling like that of Mary, mother of John Mark, where a housemaid called Rhoda acted as doorkeeper. It was not until all these early Christians, and, indeed, their children after them, had been long dead, that money began to be spent on architecture. The world-wide mission was inaugurated with an open-air meeting at some street-corner in Jerusalem. Paul preached wherever he could get a hearing—in synagogues, by the riverside at Philippi, on the hill of the pagan god Mars at Athens, on the steps of the citadel in Jerusalem, in Herod's palace, and in a hired house under the shadow of Cæsar's throne, where he was—as he puts it—an ambassador in bonds. The energy that we devote to mortgages, debts, and bazaars was concentrated by these pioneers on the supreme task of winning men. For why should they waste their forces on material shrines? Anywhere and everywhere they

expected to meet God. The first vision came to Stephen when he was in the dock. The second came to Paul on a turnpike road. The third came to Peter in a tannery, of all places, and the last came to John in a salt-mine.

Nor did they waste time or temper in wrangling over ordinances. The only altars that they knew of were in the Jewish or Pagan temples and they broke their bread simply, going from house to house. There were no baptisteries; and Philip, when approached by the Ethiopian eunuch, therefore used a well in the desert of Gaza, now familiar to the armed forces of the Allies. At Philippi, Paul and Silas administered the rite in a jailer's lodge. Indeed, so afraid was he of exalting the mere form, that in writing to the Corinthians, he actually thanked God that he had himself baptized none of them, save Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas. "Christ sent me not to baptize," said he,—and the very word "sent" indicates apostleship—"but to preach the gospel." There lay the thing to be done—not to elaborate systems but to liberate souls.

If then I am asked to furnish a first glimpse of these few scattered Christians, I reply that they were simple folk. Unencumbered by machinery and traditions and caste and ritual, they moved freely over the whole realm of opportunity. Stephen and Philip might be appointed to serve tables while Peter and John preached. But if Stephen and Philip preached as helpfully as Peter and John, they were invited to do so. No Church can grow—no country can develop—unless there be this freedom of opportunity, this simple aim, this one thing

for you and for me to do. The disciples knew what the one thing was, they did it, and therefore they turned the whole world upside down.

These are days when every institution seeks to justify its usefulness by propaganda. The one Catholic and world-wide Church of Christ, as a spiritual body, has grown directly from the little societies of early Christians whose thought and life will be described in these pages. As they drew inspiration from their Bible, so shall we draw inspiration from ours. As they brought ancient wisdom to bear on modern problems, so shall we follow their example. What we read of old times bears upon what we do in the twentieth century. Our schools and colleges tell us that we learn much by fighting over again the battles of Greece and Rome. These Christians fought the biggest battle of all, and it continues unto this day.

II

THE ONE UNITED FAMILY

LET us take the New Testament and read for ourselves the Acts of the Apostles, and then record our first and immediate impression. Does it not strike you at once that if these early Christians revisited us to-day they would need a dictionary? It seems to me that they would have been utterly puzzled by our sectarian labels. Among the Jews, as among Moslems of our own times, there were, doubtless, parties—Pharisees, Sadducees and so on—but I hardly dare to think what Paul would have said about the schisms which now cleave asunder the Body of Christ. We do indeed hear of Nicolaitines at Ephesus but they were solemnly denounced by John the apostle. Paul was illustrious, Peter was venerable, Apollos was eloquent, but no denomination was named after any of them. Against terms like Lutheran, Wesleyan, Franciscan, Dominican, Benedictine, it is not for me to utter one word, but I must point out that all these societies came later. Their especial tenets, however valuable,—the things in which they differ from the rest of us—were not among the essentials of the faith. Somehow or other, the one claim of Christ included all the rest.

Believe me, I do not criticize—not at all—I

merely dig deep to the fundamentals. Baptism was administered—that is clear—but I do not find that there were people called Baptists. Preachers went on circuit, but there were no Methodists. Elders were ordained, but there were no Presbyterians. Congregations were autonomous, but there were no Congregationalists or Independents. Galatia was a diocese, but there were no Episcopalians. Paul was probably unmarried, and he certainly bound himself by vows, but he was not a monk or a friar. The good and true in each group everywhere was shared by all. Many famous countries received the Gospel, but none of them was honoured by a national or geographical church. There was a Church of Rome,—indeed, several—but the Church was not bent upon dominion. Nor were there Anglican and Armenian and Greek and Russian Churches, asserting their nationalism. As the faith was proclaimed in many languages to Parthians and Medes and Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia, so was there afterwards One Body of Christ, in Whom Jew and Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free were united. Every Christian was equally the elect or chosen child of the One Eternal Father and, as such, was brother or sister of every other Christian.

In the early Church there was doubtless variety. Each little group that met for worship had its own problems, its own hopes and joys. Paul did not write to Corinth where the trouble was sensuality as he wrote to Galatia, where there was ritualism, or to Philippi, where he had no fault to find. He did not treat every church alike, he allowed for

individuality, but, on the other hand, he declared that all were one in Christ Jesus. The Corinthian and Galatian and Philippian must greet one another as brethren, not as rivals and parties.

Even in the upper room at Jerusalem, the Church, though small in numbers, included all sorts and conditions of people. A well-to-do woman like Mary of Magdala, doubtless accompanied by Joanna and Susannah, who were ladies from Herod's court, associated intimately with Mary, the widow of a carpenter. Nicodemus and his friend, Joseph of Arimathea, though members of the Sanhedrin, accepted the leadership of fishermen like Peter and John. Simon, the zealot, consorted with Matthew the publican. As the Church grew, so were these contrasts multiplied. Beggars who had been cripples worshipped side by side with landlords who had sold their estates. Onesimus, the runaway Phrygian slave, was pardoned by Philemon, the master whom he had defrauded. A jailer would bathe the wounds inflicted by him on his convicts. A tent-maker in chains would preach to Cæsar's household, and to the courtiers of the Asmonean Prince, Aristobulus. The same message stirred Babylon, in decay; Galatia, in superstition; Ephesus, in idolatry; Athens, with her philosophy; Rome, with her politics; and Ethiopia, sunk in savagery. Somehow or other, the emissaries of peace were—then as now—often well received by soldiers. Peter got on excellently with Cornelius, the centurion of Cæsarea. And Paul was kindly treated by the officer who escorted him, over sea and land, to Rome.

In one small town, you may see to-day many

churches and chapels, each separate from the other. But, in apostolic times, the Christians, though scattered abroad by persecution, remained one family. Paul would travel a thousand miles gathering money from wealthy communities like Philippi, for distribution in Judea, where already the nemesis of the Crucifixion, culminating in the ruin of Jerusalem, was casting the shadow of poverty over the people. What drew that ever-widening circle together was not the pressure of creeds and rubrics on the circumference, but the attraction of Him Who was the Centre. Yet there was much variety of teaching. While Paul insisted upon justification by faith, James held that faith without works is dead. Both views were right, but clearly there was here every chance of a split. Again, Paul differed sharply from Barnabas over John Mark, and every one knew it—there was no attempt to conceal the trouble—but the Church of Cyprus, where Barnabas laboured, remained none the less a normal Christian communion, without adjective or qualification; and it was Paul who, years later, begged that John Mark might relieve his loneliness with Luke in Rome because he was profitable in the ministry. Over questions like eating with Gentiles, Paul withstood Peter at Antioch, face to face, because he was to be blamed; yet Peter was the apostle who, in his letters to the faithful, expressly insisted that Paul's writings, though sometimes hard to be understood, were truly inspired. These men had to solve problems of great delicacy, like the election of an apostle, or the apportionment of money between Grecian and Hebrew widows, or the admission of

Gentile converts with or without circumcision; but, through it all, they managed to be "of one accord"—"of one mind." They had not so much the same use or ceremonial as the "same love," working in the One Body, through one faith, towards one hope, by one baptism, towards one Lord and Father of all.

This unity of the Spirit was the more wonderful because the believers were of our common clay—men of like passions with others. Peter had denied his Master thrice. Thomas had doubted. Nicodemus had come to the Lord by night. Seven devils had dwelt in Mary Magdalene. Only yesterday, as it seemed, the disciples had intrigued for preëminence, had rebuffed the children, had shrunk from the Cross, had demanded the visible kingdom. Among them there were Ananias and Sapphira, who kept back part of the price; Simon Magus, who offered money for the grace of God; Eutychus, who slept during a sermon; Rhoda, the excitable housemaid; Saul, with his bigotry; Peter, with his prejudices; Mark, with his irresolution; the Corinthian women with their gossip. There were Galatians, bewitched by Rabbis; Thessalonians who put a date to the Second Coming; and Ephesians who lost their first love. Judaizers from Jerusalem wanted to lay burdens on the Gentiles, which was too strict; while at Pergamos, the Christians ate things sacrificed to idols, which was too lax. At Thyatira, the unwary were seduced by a prophetess, Jezebel. And the Laodiceans were neither hot nor cold. Even in Sardis their works were not perfect; in Philadelphia they had but a little strength. Busybodies went about mak-

ing trouble. Women—some of them widows—were ostentatious in dress. Rich men craved for special honour. And pious men struck straight at home-life by advocating celibacy.

Yet amid these cross-currents, unity was still maintained. At Corinth, Paul might have to defend the Resurrection. To the elect lady, John might have to suggest that persons who wilfully deny the Christ cannot expect Christian hospitality. With fearful emphasis, Timothy would be warned against seducing spirits, and Jude, earnestly contending for the faith, would denounce the ungodly who creep in unawares—the dreamers who defile the flesh. But, however perilous the times, the freedom of the Gospel was preferred to an external uniformity. The only discipline was the constraining love of Christ, and it was sufficient. What they valued was "the glorious liberty of the children of God"—the liberty which is itself a law, as in a family, where the tie is affection.

The Body of Christ was One; He was alone the Head, and the rest were members one of another. Some were like hands or feet, or even humbler organs of sense, but all were necessary, all were honourable, and a wound inflicted on one of them hurt the entire community. And so was it with the communities of saints. The Churches of Asia were seven. They shone severally, like lamps on a lampstand. For each there was an angel or messenger, bright and kindling as a star, held eternally in the hand of God. Each Church had done its own works, faced its own problems, recorded its own successes or failures, and the ear of each was

invited, severally, for an individual warning or encouragement. But the Voice that spoke was one, the Eye that saw was one, and one also was the sevenfold Spirit. To Ephesus, God was the Presence, walking amid the candlesticks. To Smyrna, He was the Resurrection that lives through death. To Pergamos, He was the sharp two-edged sword that smites the evil. To Thyatira, He was our nature—feet and eyes—in glory. To Sardis, He was Light amid darkness. To Philadelphia, He was the Key of Destiny; and to Laodicea, He was Amen, Who keeps His promises. But amid this solemn variety of vision, there rose, solitary and tremendous, what may be called the Personality of Jehovah—the great I AM—ordaining His own rewards for him who overcomes—the tree of life, that satisfies—the hidden manna and white stone with a new name, known only to him who receives it—power over nations—clean raiment—safety in the second death—the pillar in the temple—the seat on the throne. What wonder if Christians, so taught, maintained their unity? Three thousand might be added to their numbers in a few days—men and women of every clime—but they had all things in common because fear came on every soul and a joy which all could share.

III

THE MODESTY OF THE SAINTS

IN the Middle Ages, people were so grateful to the early Christians that, wherever the name of a disciple is mentioned in the New Testament, they put the word "saint" as prefix, and, in their pictures, surrounded the head with a halo. Among the apostles, no such practices prevailed. Great lamentation was made for Stephen, but he remained Stephen. Of him as of the Saviour, no relics were preserved. There were no pilgrimages to his tomb—no masses for the repose of his soul—no prayers associated with his memory. When James was martyred, he was mourned on the same condition, and when Paul wrote to Corinth and again to Salonica about those who had departed this life, he said not a word about the honours which, with a challengeable reverence, have been bestowed by later generations. In discussing his own approaching end, he never suggested that after death he would assist his friends by intercession. Be it life or death, Christ alone was to be magnified. His hand alone conferred the crown or halo of righteousness. The multitude in white robes, who came out of great tribulation, do not rival His preëminence, but serve Him day and night. To Him alone, the elders render that in-

cense which is a symbol of the prayers of saints. And when in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we read of Abel and Abraham and David and the great crowd of witnesses, it is because every eye looks towards Him.

In that upper room at Jerusalem, what made people wonder was not a halo, imposed from without by the art or authority of man, but a flame, kindling within, by the divine Spirit of God. On every one of them that fire burned. Every disciple, without exception, was thus fully a saint, women as well as men, for, as it seems to me, neither sex is excluded by the narrative. I like to think that whereas each of them could see the flame over his neighbour's head, none could admire it over his own. As Paul put it, years afterwards, each esteemed other better than himself. Indeed, of the actual apostles, one-half disappear at this point from the recorded history. The book which we call the Acts of the Apostles should be entitled more accurately the deeds of the Spirit. Not that these noble-hearted men were unfaithful in their service. They were like great artists who leave us pictures without a signature, as if to imply that their inspiration belongs wholly to the one eternal Author. They drove their mines far below ground, declining advertisement, and while you will not find their names on posters that meet the eye, those names are graven none the less, as John declared, on the foundations of the city of God.

An exquisite illustration of how tender-hearted they were, how freely they forgave one another, is found in that opening scene, in the upper room,

when Peter stood up to address them. All were conscious that they had forsaken the Lord and fled. Not one uttered a taunt against the comrade who had been found out. They distinguished at once between the unhallowed remorse of Judas, and Peter's repentance. What changed Peter's despair into a saving faith was the Lord's look, His message, His personal interview. And how different would have been the drama if backbiting had occurred. In Paul's astonishing words to the Ephesians, the Holy Spirit would have been "grieved." Wind and fire are symbols of God—strong and terrible symbols—but how quickly sensitive to atmospheric conditions!

These men and women, who are to us so illustrious, were, for the most part, rustic and unlettered. They spoke the Galilean dialect—as in England we should say, Yorkshire or Somerset; and Paul, who could hold his own with kings and statesmen, tells us plainly that God chooses simple folk—not the wise and learned—to be His fellow-workers. If Peter wrote letters that are now immortal in literature, if John's vision revealed for all time the mysteries of Heaven and Hell and Destiny, it was because these men, with no discernible natural gifts, were educated in the Spirit. Their only books were the Old Testament, and, if limited, their reading was the more thorough. Their university was life—their college was experience—their tutors were hardship and danger. Genius was only their final reward—a gift from Him in Whom they drew every breath. It was the reward of the Spirit in which they read and pondered. Where we are critical, they were

reverent. Where we look for mistakes, they sought for sustenance. And they were modest enough to admit that God has secrets which are not revealed: that the riches of Christ are unsearchable: and that—as Paul warned the Colossians—it is the fleshly mind, puffed up, which intrudes. They accepted the fact that we only see through a glass darkly—we only know in part. And instead of adding to the Gospel, they thus endeavoured to spread it. Where so many, like the Athenians, speculated on any new notion that presented itself, humility made the Christians practical and helpful.

They did not take the view that one belief is as good as another. On the contrary, John told the elect lady that she should neither extend hospitality nor wish Godspeed to those who bring not the teaching of Christ. Paul told the Thessalonians to withdraw themselves from all who walk disorderly. Jude utters a fearful denunciation of dreamers who defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Timothy is urged to combat professors who creep into houses and lead captive silly women. Peter, remembering what our Lord said about false Christs, pronounces swift destruction against all who traffic in damnable heresies. It is for each of us to try the spirits and see how far they come within the true faith, once delivered to us. The mere fact that Theosophy and the Occult and Psychism and Astrology are taught among us, does not imply that Peter and Paul and Jude would have tolerated these beliefs.

It was not that they objected to knowledge. As a historian, Luke is unsurpassed for accurate

sequence, and his description of Paul's voyage, with its numerous nautical terms, like south wind, Euroclydon, using helps, undergirding the ship, striking sail, sounding, casting anchor, loosing the rudder-bands, hoisting the mainsail, and so on, has been the admiration of expert sailors. And Luke was also a doctor, who could talk about "the ankle-bones" of a healed cripple: the precise injuries of Judas Iscariot when he fell: the exact malady which destroyed Herod the king. Paul, too, although he was town-bred, and lacked the exquisite appreciation of flowers and birds and the country-side, which we find elsewhere in Scripture, could discuss natural-religion, as we call it, with the men of Lystra, and comparative-religion with the men of Athens. The Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians, precisely because of this readiness of mind—this searching of the Bible—this refusal to accept as truth what was not so proved. But with sorcery, as of Elymas, or Simon Magus, or the poor slave-girl of Philippi, the apostles would make no terms. They saw, at once, that one of its motives was greed. The girl brought her masters much gain. Simon Magus regarded the Holy Ghost as an investment. And the talkers and deceivers, condemned in the letter to Titus, whose mouths must be stopped, subverted whole houses for filthy lucre's sake. The point of Jude's denunciation was that these ungodly men "ran greedily for reward," and of some modern cults this also may be suspected. Their pontiffs, also, as Peter says, would make merchandise of us.

The other motive for these curious arts was pride—that deadliest sin which ruined Satan.

Paul, in his letter to Timothy, compared these men with Jannes and Jambres, who were, it is believed, the sorcerers in Egypt who chiefly withstood Moses. To Jude, they were as Korah, who revolted against the ordinances of the Tabernacle; or Cain, who as John tells us, slew his brother out of religious jealousy. The story of Balaam, with its disclosures of avarice and obduracy, much influenced the disciples, and is mentioned as a warning, both in Jude and in the apocalyptic letter to Thyatira. And, most interesting of all, is the reference by Jude to Michael, the Archangel, who would not take it upon himself even to accuse Satan, but merely said, "The Lord rebuke thee." Even among archangels, therefore, the saving virtue was humility.

Propagandists, without humility, were, in Jude's words—spots in the love-feast, clouds without water, trees without fruit, raging waves of the sea, wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. In Paul's view, they were traitors, heavy, and "high-minded," or—to quote Alford's rendering — besotted with pride—"unruly and vain," are other of Paul's adjectives. And, coupled with such a mental attitude, thus condemned, was always the peril of moral disaster. Nameless vices are indicated, and Peter and Jude refer to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In the disciples, we thus see that humility was linked with strength and authority. Paul would declare that whoever preaches another Gospel was Anathema Maranatha. Yet when struck in the mouth, and so betrayed into a hasty word, he

meekly apologized to a persecuting priest. He healed a man at Lystra, and a moment afterwards said that he and Barnabas were men of like passions with pagans. Peter upraised the lame beggar, and instantly denied that the power was his. He saw a vision, and, at once, said to the kneeling Cornelius, "Stand up"—no more genuflexions—"I also am a man." What may have saved Corinth from schism was the tactful withdrawal of Apollos from a too popular ministry. No man stood more firmly than Paul for the principle that the Gentiles need not be circumcised. Indeed, it was because he was accused of leading Trophimus, the Ephesian, past the wall of partition and into the Temple, that he was arrested and ultimately lost his life. Yet in the case of Timothy, whose father was a Greek, and his mother, a Jewess, Paul—to mitigate hostility—applied the rite, and Timothy humbly submitted. Indeed, in his desire to be all things to all men, Paul, in visiting Jerusalem, laid aside his controversies with the Judaizers, and, at the request of James, bound himself with four others, in a Nazarite vow, which was publicly ratified, shaved his head, and so was made of no reputation.

It was the Master's mind that led these men. As a contrast what impressed them about Gamaliel's speech in the Sanhedrin was his allusion to Theudas, who boasted himself to be somebody, but was brought to nought; and Judas of Galilee—who revolted against the Roman census—in both of which cases the followers were dispersed or scattered. It was humility that reconciled Peter with Paul, and Paul with John Mark. When the

widows murmured, it was humility that led the apostles to institute deacons. And when the Christians in the Balkans suggested that Paul derived advantage from the collections for the poor in Judea, it was humility that enabled him to appoint trustees for the money, separate from himself. Yet there was no sacrifice of dignity. Timothy might be circumcised, but let no one despise his youth. Paul might be tormented by disease, but let him tremble who sneered at his mean appearance or denied his Roman citizenship. Peter and John might be wholly dependent on the power of the Spirit, but woe to Ananias and Sapphira, who in their presence trifled with the truth.

IV

THE HAPPINESS OF THE FAITHFUL

THE Church to-day is puzzled because the number of her children does not increase. We ask why it was that disciples, though few at the outset, multiplied so rapidly? In one day at Jerusalem about three thousand converts were won, and, later, we read of five thousand, with multitudes of men and women, added daily. For a time the movement was thus popular. It found favour with the people, some of whom swam with the stream. But persecution, when it arose, did not hinder it. By their efforts to stamp out the fire in Jerusalem, the priests scattered sparks throughout the Roman Empire. Faith was kindled in the least likely places—at Ephesus, where Diana-worship was a vested interest; at Corinth, with its race-course; at Cæsarea, where Herod patronized the brutalities of the amphitheatre; in Samaria, reeking with prejudice; and even in Lycaonia, where the ignorant villagers believed in Jupiter and Mercury.

Sometimes a preacher, like Philip, who is now recognized as illustrious, spread the cause, but not always. Churches often sprang into existence, as it were by spontaneous combustion. At Damascus, and in the desert, there were Christians waiting to

receive the converted Saul. To Antioch faith came, not only direct from Jerusalem, but from Cyrene in North Africa and from Cyprus; although, at the time, this island had not yet been visited by Paul and Barnabas. There is not a hint that Peter founded the Church of Rome, and Paul's great Epistle to the Christians in that city is, by its omissions, almost proof to the contrary. Years before the Apostle of the Gentiles was taken under escort to Cæsar's courts, there were communities of Christians, organized with elders, unordained by any known apostle, and meeting in residences, like that of Priscilla and Aquila.

From the first, the converts had—in a workman's phrase—to pay their footing. Even at the best of times, it always cost something to become a Christian. They were baptized, and every one knew it. To the apostles they went daily for instruction. They prayed. Revising their friendships, they broke bread with one another. They shared what we call real property—that is, their lands and houses, which were sold, and the money paid to those who were in need. They endured hardship, imprisonment, flogging, and violent death. Many of them — like Timothy — surrendered the amenities of home life, and sallied forth as missionaries. And the question for us is: What made it worth while?

The churches grew because the Christians were happier than other people. The Temple gleamed with marble and gold, but it was rent by sectarian controversy. Athens was full of idols, but Athens was frivolous. The first Agrippa dazzled the populace with his robes, but was eaten of worms.

The second Agrippa, despite all his pomp, was almost persuaded to be a Christian. Saul was a rising politician, yet his career hurt him like kicking against the goad. Gallio, who governed Achaia, had wisdom, but it was only the wisdom of the cynic. At mention of righteousness and judgment to come, Festus, the viceroy, trembled. Nero was—as Paul put it—fierce as a lion, but his only realm was misery. Amid the pomp of circumstance—and the unhappiness—of a great military despotism, the disciples with their praises of God, shed abroad a sudden gladness, and this radiance of joy was infectious.

Some large meetings were held; but, in the main, the glow of happiness was manifest, not in the excitement of revivals, but in individuals, and often under the most discouraging circumstances. The cripple, whose ankle-bones received strength, leaped like an hart. At Philip's preaching there was great joy, even in Samaria. The Ethiopian eunuch, on accepting the Gospel, went on his way rejoicing. Flogged, by order of the Sanhedrin, the apostles also praised the Saviour; and when tried for his life, Stephen confronted the court with a face like an angel's. Thrust into the inner dungeon of a prison, their bodies bleeding from many stripes and their limbs stiff in the stocks, Paul and Silas sang hymns through a sleepless night. In the earthquake that followed, as in the shipwreck off Malta, Paul's preëminence lay simply in this, that he was the happiest person amid the tumult. When the Philippian jailer joined the Christians, he also and his family were infected with the same joy. How he bathed his prisoners' wounds, and

gave them breakfast at his own table, is a story so delightful in its cheeriness that it lives on, a favourite with us all. The long, grave face, which is our idea of religious etiquette, does not appear in these records, except among the Pagans.

Yet these Christians did not live in a Golden Age. The Jews had lost their freedom and were ruled by foreign tyrants. The grim handmaidens of justice were the scourge, or knout, the rod, the chain and the cross, and from all of these the disciples suffered their full share. The "powers-that-be" patronized idolatry, which lay like a brand upon the sports and pastimes and even on the food of the nations. The sick and wounded were left to their fate and the poor begged for bread. Commerce and vice were upheld by slavery and black arts abounded. The apostles did not ignore these things. At Samaria, at Paphos, at Philippi, and at Ephesus, they fought relentlessly against the sorcerers. To them, as to our missionaries, idolatry was not a historical phase to be studied, but an active foe to be conquered; and their attitude was not that of Naaman, who bowed in the house of Rimmon, but of Daniel, who would touch no dainties consecrated to the gods. It was the Gospel, and only the Gospel, that changed Onesimus, the slave, with his master, Philemon, into "brothers beloved." Against immorality, the disciples spoke with uncompromising bluntness, and James gives us a terrible picture of corrupt wealth, derived from the sweating system. It was in no garden of Eden that these men cultivated happiness. All day and every day, they were in the world, but they were not of it. They felt

themselves to be a peculiar or separate people; and as pilgrims and sojourners, they had no abiding city. Yet, unlike the exiles by the waters of Babylon, they did not refuse to sing the songs of Zion in a strange land. Instead of hanging their harps on the willow-tree, they joined together in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in their hearts, as a contrast to discords beyond.

No wonder that they yearned for God's Kingdom to be set up on earth, here and now. They were Utopians before Sir Thomas More—Socialists before Estlin Carpenter—Internationalists before President Wilson. John tells us that this world, with its lusts, or desires, passeth away—it cannot last—and he saw in his vision a perfect City, holy, in which God reigns. But in the meantime, each of us must, as he puts it, overcome the world that now is—there must be wars and tumults, vials of wrath. It was amid darkness that Christ's altruists shone as lights. Slavery should be suppressed; but, as a slave, Uncle Tom must be comforted. War must end; but, in the dug-out, the soldier needs the peace that passeth understanding. Slums should be rebuilt; but, even an unsanitary tenement has been transformed by what the Rescue Missioner, in his old-fashioned way, calls, and rightly calls, *salvation*—the "salving" of men and women, who are on the rocks. When Paul asked the Philippians to rejoice always, they—remembering what had been his shameful treatment in their town—had to acknowledge that he knew what he was talking about.

No one has ever had to combat with a more

difficult temperament than Paul's. Some scholars are convinced that he suffered from epilepsy. Assuredly he was high-strung and so sensitive that it cost him tears to write a stiff letter, like his first epistle to the Corinthians. Yet he was not morose—he was no pessimist. He believed in victory. Like James, he counted it joy even to fall into temptations, because trial worked patience and patience, the capacity to suffer, was worth while, because there is such patience in God. According to Peter, this patience is more precious than fine gold, because suffering meant to him something more than a service or a sacrifice for Christ's sake. Suffering helped him to understand Christ—as if to say, " He and I have felt one pain—have been crucified together—will share one glory." To men and women who had once forsaken Him and fled, or actually persecuted Him in His followers, this supreme chance of risking things with Him and paying the ultimate penalty evoked the same rapture with which young soldiers go forth to die in their country's cause. Christianity was not so much attending Church as volunteering for the draft, embarking on a transport, creeping forward, one by one over No-Man's-Land. They wished to win territory—a little here—a little there—and their zeal released them from the destroying cares, the sordid rivalries, the wretched lusts which war against the soul. I am told that in Britain, during the war, the people have had no time to be ill, and that, as labour increased, so did insanity decline. The early Christians had no time to be miserable. The surplus of energy which, in others, developed sin, in

them, was consecrated to service—to worship—to prayer. Their joy was thus the scientific product of a life well balanced. It was the song of the wheel that turns evenly on its axis—held to a Centre, like the planets which live in the light of the sun.

Hence their fondness for the word, heaven. The Father to Whom they prayed was a Father in Heaven. The Kingdom to which they owed allegiance was a Kingdom of Heaven. The seats where they sat near Christ were heavenly places. Heaven was to them an actual and realized happiness. Heaven was within them. It was Paul's happiness or "heavenly" disposition that broke out in the astonishing exuberance of his literary style which in an epistle like his to the Ephesians gushes forth in veritable cascades of joyous eloquence,—exultant adjectives and triumphant nouns overleaping all the customary restraints of grammar and syntax. Other classical authors wrote better Greek. Some scholars have tried to put Paul's unruly and resistless pen into such harness. But the Christians who first read his words had no inclination to parse and analyze his parentheses. They were swept along the current of that surging stream which had its source on Mount Calvary and an ocean for its destination.

V

THE POWER OF THEIR INSPIRATION

RELIGION to-day has to hold her own amid Governments, and Armies, and Navies, and Universities, and huge industries where capital and labour are organized on a world-wide scale. Mere sentiment, tradition, respectability, music, eloquence, are not enough for a situation so exacting; and if churches—indeed, if Parliaments—are to survive, they must display what Ruskin has called the lamp of power. The most hostile witnesses agree that among the early Christians such power was manifest. "We cannot deny it," said the priests, when an impotent cripple was healed. "These men," complained the Philippians, "do exceedingly trouble our city." "They turn the world upside down," protested the Thessalonians.

It was revolution, not by blows, but by ideas; and Danton himself was not more audacious than Peter and John, when—unlearned though they were—they faced the Sanhedrin. About Stephen's preaching there was that which could not be resisted. And as for Paul, when he was a prisoner at Rome, chained and penniless, he faced the Emperor with an air of quiet mastery which Napoleon would have envied. "Conquests!" wrote he to Corinth—"we are more than conquerors."

Why he did not blush for the Gospel, or apologize, was just this—that, addressing Romans when Rome was mistress of civilization, he could boast that his was a greater power—the power, not of Empire, but of God; the power, not to subjugate all men by outward force, but to save all men by inward grace.

It was no mere bravado. This Gospel that Paul declared was not pretty, or fantastic, or novel. On the contrary, as he told the Galatians, he was in matters of theology what we should call a rigid conservative, who only put his trust in what he had tested. Nor was this power a superstition. The disciples were clear in their minds whence it came. The considered judgment of the world was that Jesus of Nazareth died a convicted felon, and was buried in the usual way. In the bazaars of Jerusalem they talked, not of His Resurrection, but of the Iscariot's suicide; not of His Ascension, but of that traitor's headlong downfall; not of a Heart broken by love, but of a heart shattered by despair; not of an Empty Tomb, but of Aceldama, a field of blood; not of Glad Tidings of great joy for strangers of every nation, but of a graveyard to bury them in. Then, as now, tragedies of soul made better copy for what corresponded to Sunday newspapers than mere rescues or conversions; and it was against the whole array of public opinion that Peter declared Jesus to be a Person *approved of God.* In view of His Divinity this was a modest claim—it might have been said of many good men; but in his first sermon, the apostle, step by step, proceeded to announce that this Jesus—the same Jesus—was raised from the dead to an Eternal

Throne, where He sits as God's Right-Hand Man—to adapt our phrase, human, like unto ourselves, yet Divine and Supreme.

Scholars tell us that the first written of all Christian documents were Paul's letters to the Thessalonians. In both of them the opening verse couples together "God the Father" with "Our Lord Jesus Christ." To the Galatians, also, Paul wrote of "Jesus Christ and God the Father," thus actually giving precedence on this occasion to the Son; while, to Timothy, the ascription was, "God Our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ."

So absolutely did these, His followers, believe that all power had been given to Him, in heaven and earth; so fully did they accept His Word for it, that they preached, not only Christ the Redeemer, but Christ the Creator and Upholder of the Universe. In their earliest anthem there was, perhaps, a distinction drawn between the Almighty and the Holy Child Jesus; and, in Paul's addresses, both to the people of Lystra and to the people of Athens, there was not, in set terms, a reference to the creative work of the Messiah. But, in his epistles—for instance, to the Colossians—he tells us explicitly that "God's dear Son" made "all things that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible;" indeed, "He is before all things and by Him all things consist." In the hour of death, Stephen so saw Him, standing in the plenitude of His active authority. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, like John in his vision, also reveals these surpassing glimpses of Christ in glory. And, so impressed were the disciples with His omnipotent majesty, that they were in danger

of forgetting Him as the One Whom they actually heard—saw with their eyes—looked upon and handled. The first heresy to be denounced was not a denial of His Divinity—that aspect shone forth unmistakable—but of His actual, personal humanity.

Under the stress of such reverence, the disciples looked to Him, at the outset, to do everything for them. He and He alone was to set up the Kingdom and He was to do it at once. They would have crowned Him a Czar—a Despot. He welded them into a Duma. "Ye shall receive power" was what He willed—as if He would only reign a constitutional monarch, not by compulsion, but by consent. Creation was a sole act. In Redemption, we are, as Paul explains it, His partners. He gives us salvation, and we work it out, with fear and trembling. He provides the armour of light, but we wear it. He announces the Good News, but we are His ambassadors. He died on the Cross, once for all men, but we are crucified with Him. We are fellow-workers, joint-heirs, brethren—everything except fellow-Saviours; there He stands alone. The speed of a navy is its slowest ship. The strength of a chain is its weakest link. Autocrats act more quickly than ill-organized democracy. And undoubtedly His triumph is long-delayed because in love and patience He is determined that we shall share it.

Indeed, this does not fully state the case. Our idea is that the big days of power were when Jesus visibly walked in Palestine, working His miracles. But His promise was that the disciples—and He sets no time-limit—would do greater things than

these. So completely did He humble Himself, that He would speak like a modest pioneer who leaves to others the fruits of his discovery. Every organizer knows that success depends, not on doing things oneself, but on inspiring others to do them. Our Saviour is the Author of capability. The greater things that He desired are on record. He rebuked a fig-tree and it withered. Peter rebuked Ananias and Sapphira and they died. Jesus mastered storms on a lake. The storms that He enabled Paul to master were oceanic. He spoke to the Jews in one country. He sent His disciples to all nations in every land. He escaped wild beasts in the desert. Paul survived an actual snakebite. The Baptist died in a dungeon, but no dungeon could hold Peter and Paul when the work of Christ Risen had to be done. A woman touched the hem of His garment and was healed. But in the very shadow of Peter there was the same power, and Paul's garments were laid on the sick, who were made whole. If He cast out devils, so did they. If He raised the dead, so again did they. If He preached the Gospel in one place at one time and in one language, they were scattered abroad, preaching in many places, in many languages, with His signs following. The greater things were, thus, a fact. Those who trusted Him were not left "comfortless."

But there were conditions. "Without Me," He had said, "ye can do nothing," and in the plenitude of their authority, the disciples never forgot this. Peter and Paul, and James and John, and Jude, wrote epistles. In those letters you will find many personal reminiscences, but I do not remember

one mention of a miracle of which the writers were the instruments. So instinctive is their reticence, that they seemed to be themselves unconscious of it. And it is just here that the Faith is at a disadvantage, compared with activities more loudly advertised. The man enabled to work a real miracle is, for this very reason, incapable of boasting about it. It was Luke, Paul's intimate friend, who made it clear, not that Paul's clothes healed people, but that the Lord wrought special miracles through Paul. The critics, who tell us that miracles are disproved by silence about them, fail to appreciate the very elements of the Christian mystery, which they think they have studied. As Our Lord's opening of the blind man's eyes was investigated by the Sanhedrin, so was Peter's word of help to the lame man similarly investigated by the same body; both events stood the test of scrutiny. But neither Our Saviour nor His apostle aimed at such publicity. It came unsought. What concerned Master and servant was simply the day's work.

Yet does any one imagine that when these disciples wrote about weakness made strong, darkness flooded with light, misery turned into joy, old men changed into new men, and so on, they meant nothing except a pious phrase? These words were used, not by raw recruits, but by veterans, who had seen years of active service. The wealth, thus indicated, was not an estimate; it was realized revenue. Peter's earliest addresses were simple testimonies to Our Lord's life, death, resurrection, and ascension. They were clear and true as the first basic propositions in Euclid. But his Epistles

—composed years later—how rich the glory that shines from their glowing and majestic witness!

The life lived by Peter and Paul led to a good hope, an end to harassing uncertainties, a ripe and noble love for fellow-men. And the supreme problem for us is this: In what, in Whom lay their power? How and when and whence received they this Spirit? This is what we must investigate. It was not eloquence. The only preacher whose eloquence is particularly mentioned is Apollos, and not one word of his remains on record. It was not sensationalism. Gamaliel, the Pharisee leader, drew an instructive distinction between the apostles and men like Theudas, who boasted himself to be somebody, and Judas of Galilee, who led a revolt. In addressing the Salonicans, Paul expressly avoided "flattering words." And the Corinthians were warned that words of wisdom might have actually made the Cross of Christ of none effect. The "power" depended on no such aids. It was the privilege of men who were not their own, but bought with a price.

In a sentence, it was the power of "the Spirit." Throughout the entire narrative power and Spirit are linked together in one phase. In the power of the Spirit Jesus began His public ministry. Asked by what power he healed the lame man, Peter, in his answer, was filled with the Holy Spirit. Sapphira fell dead because she tempted this all-powerful Spirit. Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, was also endued with wisdom, faith, and power. Even Simon Magus knew that the secret of the apostle's power was this Spirit. Filled with the Spirit, the

converted Saul increased in strength. Wherever these men of the Spirit went there was clear, courageous speech, wise and far-sighted policy, righteous and terrible rebuke, patient and sympathetic teaching. In the Spirit they became statesmen, physicians, orators, theologians, organizers, and good citizens and neighbours. And that same Spirit is eternal, available for every age, every climate, every circumstance.

VI

THE METHOD OF THE FIRST MISSIONARIES

WARM as was the zeal of the disciples, their proceedings never lapsed into anarchy. The Gospel was not preached at random, but in orderly sequence—first, at Jerusalem, then in Samaria, and so on to the ends of the earth. Paul told the Corinthians that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace; and, like Jude, he rebuked those who despise dominion and speak evil of dignities. And among the first acts of the Church was the election of an apostle. This event deserves our close study, because it occurred before the gift of the Spirit, for which the disciples had been told to wait. As I read the story, it is clear that Our Saviour, in His wisdom, put the Spirit before all questions of organization, whereas the disciples, though prayerful, patient and united, were a little inclined to modify this plan. Roman Catholics would say that the Church, assembled as it was in General Council—small in numbers but universal in its mission, with Peter standing in the midst—must have been infallible, and that the supreme necessity was an Apostolic Succession. I suggest that the lesson is rather that Churches, unless they be guided by the Spirit, are not thus

infallible, and that even Peter, however deep our reverence for him, was not so complete, so wonderful a counsellor as his Lord.

If this great leader of the Church met the empty chair of the Iscariot with courage, it was because he was prepared for the situation by prophecies. These were to him no legerdemain of—what shall I say?—telepathy or superstition, but a Divine safeguard against surprises which might have wounded the souls of men. The treachery of Judas, so strange and startling, had been foreseen. Centuries ago, David had realized that, in summing up all wickedness, redemption would not omit human perfidy. The Psalmist knew that if a man be faithless to his bishopric, *i. e.*, his work in the world, whatever it be, another must undertake it. So, basing himself on Scripture, Peter led the way, with firm footstep; and he teaches us also that supreme moral calamities, like war and desolation, were not unforeseen by our Redeemer. They do not mean that He has failed—He reckoned in advance with all such distresses.

Moreover, it was true, as Peter said, that Our Lord chose precisely twelve apostles, one for each tribe of Israel. Reuben, unstable as water—the man who does not excel—must have an apostle. So must Simeon and Levi, the hard men, in whose homes are instruments of cruelty. An apostle must help Judah, who bears the sceptre, and is born to command. Zebulun the sailor, and Gad the soldier, must each have a missioner. Issachar, the strong ass bowed down, the unskilled labourer, the navvy, deserves a message. Dan, the clever and treacherous judge, requires conversion, like

the rest of us. Asher, the courtier, fed with royal dainties, needs glad tidings, as does Naphtali, the hind let loose, the literary man, who giveth goodly words. Benjamin, the wolf who hunts, the pioneer, gold-digger, colonist—he must not be forgotten; and finally Joseph, the home-lover and father of children, must be drawn to the Redeemer. For every type in the community there is a gate into the City of God, and every gate is founded on an apostle. For every tribe there is a throne of authority, and on the throne is seated an apostle. We may not know which apostle will reach which tribe—the tribes are four times three and the apostles are three times four—but if one apostle turns traitor be very sure that a gate is closed, a throne is empty, and a tribe is forlorn. Up to this point, at any rate, Peter gripped the situation.

But one detects, just here, a note of uncertainty. Our trouble is a scarcity of clergy or witnesses—theirs was superabundance. Joseph was suitable and so was Matthias, but there was no obvious way of selecting between them. The predicament was one that has split many a church, but, in this case, there is no suggestion of party nor of canvassing for votes. They did not even ask which candidate had a majority, but only desired that God's choice should be made effective. Before selecting His Twelve, Our Lord spent a whole night in prayer. And, at Antioch, Barnabas and Saul were not set apart for missionary work until the Spirit had expressly spoken. But, in the upper room, acting before the Spirit came, the disciples resorted to lots. If there be no direct guidance, it was the best thing to be done, for, "of a lot," it is

said that "the whole disposing is of the Lord." A lot had detected the sin of Achan and the offense of Jonathan. A lot apportioned land to the Israelites and duties to the priests. But it was also a lot that distributed Our Saviour's raiment, and when the Spirit came, this use of what men called "chance" was superseded. It was explicit revelation that condemned Ananias and Sapphira and ordained Paul, nor is any system of preferment that depends on political or social intrigues, a statesman's hurried whim, or a landowner's claims of blood, really adequate to the Saviour's full purpose.

When Our Lord bade farewell to His disciples, He knew that Judas was dead, and He could have nominated a successor. Instead of doing this, or of giving to His disciples what in England we call a *congé d'élire*, He told them, simply, to wait for the Spirit. This was His decision as to "times and seasons"—not organization, the visible kingdom first, but power—in a word, God. On many occasions, and it may be on this, the impetuous Peter was almost right. As he had contended in past years, there was much to be said against Our Lord risking His life at Jerusalem; much to be said for tabernacles on the Mount of Transfiguration; much to be said for the immediate election there and then of an apostle. But for us who know the sequel, there remains the question, very fruitful of modern application, whether God's plans did not even then transcend the utmost imagining of the Church.

Joseph and Matthias were picked out because from the beginning they had companied with

Jesus, seeing how He "went in and out"—His private conduct and His public career. It was the note of antiquity dominating the Church, and clearly we need this witness to the historic Redeemer. We cannot base our faith on a myth. But was this to be the only witness? Was there to be no place for a man unless he be trained, as it were, in a theological college? Christ in the flesh was truly Divine; but is not Christ risen, ascended, glorified, and present among us—is not He to receive the larger witness, as Stephen saw Him, and Paul? If apostleship had ended with His earthly contemporaries, what a blow would have been struck at the Christian movement down the ages!

Again, while the number, twelve, applied to the tribes of Israel, was there to be a kind of College of Cardinals thus limited strictly in numbers for all time, whatever new worlds there be to conquer? Our Saviour, in the flesh, preached to the Jews, but He sent His disciples into all the world; and here at Jerusalem were other tribes already gathering for Pentecost—Elamites, Parthians, dwellers in Mesopotamia. Were they to have no apostles? Was there to be no Livingstone for Africa, no Chalmers for New Guinea, no Grenfell for Labrador? Already, at Alexandria, a young student called Apollos was learning the oratory which was to thunder forth the Baptist's message throughout Achaia. A laird or squire from Cyprus, called Barnabas, was voyaging to Jerusalem, there to dispose of family estates and lay the price at the apostles' feet. A mother in Lystra, called Eunice, was teaching to Timothy his Hebrew alphabet. At Antioch, one Silas was to become a

chief man among the brethren. And a lad called Saul, a Pharisee, of the tribe of Benjamin, which was Saul's tribe, sat, hard by, at the feet of Gamaliel. When the Spirit came, they remembered that their sons and their daughters were to prophesy, their young men were to see visions, their old men were to dream dreams. Before their eyes, there lay outspread an ampler landscape, bounded only by an eternal horizon.

Matthias was elected—I am sure that he fulfilled his apostleship—but it is a fact that he is not again mentioned. When Peter faced the multitude, a day or two later, it is curious that he is described as one of the *eleven*, as if the vacancy were still unfilled! But there is a delicate humility in the subsequent behaviour of the excluded Joseph, surnamed Barsabas. He made no trouble, and he had his reward. For he appears to be again referred to, a few years later, as an honoured leader of the Syrian Church, ranking with Paul and Barnabas and Silas. It is the classical case of a man with a call not suffering discouragement because, for the moment, opportunities are denied him.

Some think that the man who ultimately filled that vacant chair, who supplied what the Iscariot was chosen to supply—namely, the statesmanship of the Church—was Paul, appointed "not of men, neither by man," as he told the Galatians, "but by Jesus Christ and God the Father." Not in Jerusalem, among the Twelve, but in Arabia, did Paul receive consecration, nor did he "confer with flesh and blood." When he visited Jerusalem, he did not see James, who presided over the parent

Church; and, in staying for a fortnight with Peter, it was as a guest and an equal. What Paul here argued was that a man speaks only with authority on the things which he has received personally from the one Lord to Whom each of us is directly responsible. For him, hearsay was not enough; he did not listen merely to the Gospel, he discovered it, he searched for it and found it. He was not easily convinced, and conviction only came to him when Christ spoke. At the first link, therefore, the Apostolic Succession was—I will not say broken—but made to depend, year by year, on present contact with Christ. They are the children of Abraham who do the works of Abraham and they are the sons of Paul in the faith who follow Paul, as Timothy did, into those solitudes where the lightest whisper of the one voice can be heard and obeyed.

VII

AN ERA OF REVIVALS

LET us suppose that on the Fourth of July or other holiday, there were to break out in this country a Revival, originating on the steps of the Capitol at Washington, but opposed by the Churches, which, awakening them none the less, transformed the religions of the American Republic! Historians would look very closely into the circumstances of so remarkable an event. The Jewish name for what we call Whitsuntide is Pentecost; and the Battle of Gettysburg itself is not an event more definite than the gift of the Spirit which is recorded for that date in the calendar.

The feasts at Jerusalem were considered to be so significant that Our Lord Himself used to attend them. Paul travelled in haste hundreds of miles over sea and land in order to observe a certain later Pentecost at Jerusalem. Nor was it mere pedantry. These seasons recalled the old annals of the race. And these annals illustrated the eternal struggles of the soul. It was not as mere history that Peter and Stephen and Paul discussed the Exodus from Egypt, but as symbol, as the language of personal experience; and if that language lives on to-day, easily decipherable, it is because litera-

ture has not furnished, after centuries of genius, a deeper, truer picture of man's escape from death unto life. This was what the disciples were thinking about, assembled in their upper room, when the Spirit came upon them. Their minds were as full of Pentecostal traditions as are our minds full of Yuletide traditions on Christmas Day.

That Pentecost lay seven weeks, precisely, from the Passover on which Our Saviour died as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. So vivid was this parallel to Paul that he would speak of Jesus as actually dying in Egypt; while his references to the manna, the rock, and the pillar of cloud and fire, were numerous and precisely symbolic. Passover, with its atonement, represented an escape of men and women from a degrading tyranny and bondage. The interval of seven weeks reminded the Jews of the wilderness, which might have been crossed so quickly, had there not been serious acts of disobedience. Seven weeks suggested a Sabbath of Sabbaths—a complete rest or convalescence from evil—in the case of the disciples, a recovery from the shame of having forsaken the Master and fled. They had great work to do, but they did not rush at it. Many hours were devoted to prayer and accurate recollection of all that Jesus had been to them. He had promised them special gifts of memory, and I cannot doubt that the exquisite fullness and perfection of the Gospels, which were written later, are attributable to the tender discussions, behind closed doors, of which, at the time, the world heard nothing.

During this pause, crowds of people were gather-

ing in Jerusalem, yet no word was uttered publicly by Christ's intimate followers. It looked as if a supreme opportunity would pass by. But these men held that no preaching at all was better than unspiritual preaching; and while their eloquence, when it was let loose, fitted the occasion, it was not provoked thereby. For, obviously, Galileans were ill-suited to audiences so cosmopolitan. They were not linguists. Their lives had been spent in narrow spheres. Yet there came upon them such tact, such winning versatility, such gifts of tongue, that, instantly, they got into touch with men and women of every nation. People heard in the language to which they were born. Common phrases glowed Divine. The curse of Babel was cancelled, and racial animosities were hushed. In Paul's words, Christians, in preaching Christ, became "all things to all men."

Yet it was not an age of faith. The current theory was that Jesus had been stolen away by His disciples. Those who had been helped by Him were scattered, discouraged, and silent. His mother and relatives lived in Jerusalem, unnoticed. So far from believing in His Atonement, the priests went on with their sacrifices, as if nothing of redemption had been finished at Calvary; and years afterwards, a letter had to be written to the Hebrews who believed, explaining how types and shadows had been fulfilled. Instead of His first day, which opens up a future week of hope and service, there was still observed a Seventh Day, which ends a week that is gone, and points to the chequered past. His Cross, now a sacred emblem, was still shameful as the gallows, and other cruci-

fixions were of frequent occurrence. His tomb was neglected; and Peter, when he spoke, displayed no fragment of the wood, no shred of the garments, no nail that pierced Him, no visible drop of His blood, whether as material relic or as evidence. Whatever view we take of the revival, it was not a mere spasm of superstition. It was not a case of clever men deceiving the ignorant. On the contrary, ignorant and unlearned men confounded the wise.

For Our Lord's way of launching His Church was not what we would have expected. After rising from the dead, He showed Himself, as He does to-day, to the few only; and all His followers, when gathered to see Him, only numbered about five hundred, and this, on a single occasion. He did not desire a vague, casual, and shallow testimony to His miracles. "Be ye witnesses of *Me*" were His last words—of My Person, as greater than My works; and such witnesses were selected with infinite care from those who really knew Him. With supreme wisdom, He was ready that the world should see no beauty in Him, provided that, for the moment, these few should see Him clearly as the King in His Beauty. This was His method, and we do well to note it.

Our harvest thanksgivings are celebrated when the last sheaf is gathered in—we walk by sight, not by faith—leaving little to what men call "chance." Pentecost was observed when the earliest little shoots—"the first-fruits" of the Father's goodness—rose above the ground skywards. It was the beginning only of that growth to harvest of which the final gathering would be

when Our Lord, coming in the clouds, thrusts in His sickle, for reaping and judgment. In the early Church, the coming of the Spirit was not final and "once for all," but continuous. As converts at Jerusalem and again at Cæsarea were multiplied, so in more generous measure was the Spirit poured out on them. Women and men equally claimed the Gift. And a Church without the Spirit was considered to be abnormal—a kind of cripple—that needed healing. At Ephesus, for instance, there were twelve men who only knew the baptism of John—the discipline of duty and repentance. Paul did not rest until they had asked for and received the Spirit. The drama of the Gospel did not end with Calvary. In his Gospel, Luke tells us that he only narrates what Jesus *began* both to do and to teach. The Book, which is entitled, "The Acts of the Apostles," leaves Paul still chained in his hired house at Rome, and the volume remains unfinished.

You would have said—and rightly—that the ritual of Jerusalem had lost much of its ancient force; that the future would lie with the modernists of Alexandria and Athens rather than with the pietists of Galilee. But it is in the humble and contrite heart that God dwells; and to be reverent towards Him, even in a decaying congregation, is better than to forget Him outside. It was not in an Ethical Society on Mars Hill, or in a Trades' Union that the flame was first kindled, but in the orthodox temple and synagogue. Cornelius, the early Gentile convert, was a devout man. So was the soldier who waited on him. So also was the Ethiopian in the desert. Such were Lois and Eunice in Timothy's home, and the mourners who

carried Stephen to his tomb. The honour was paid not to irreligion, but to religion—yet it had to be Christ's idea of religion. Dogma, without contrition, made Paul a persecutor and drove the honourable women of Iconium to stir up riot against Our Lord's missionaries.

In his life of Danton, Mr. Belloc tells us that the French Revolution, with its apparent violence and lawlessness, was really a return to the normal. Oppression, squalor, injustice, had to be swept away because they are not what men and women are made for. Similarly, a hurricane is a strictly scientific movement of air to a vacuum where creatures need air to breathe. In that upper room sat men and women in whose beings there was a great capacity for God. Like the hart at the water-brooks, they "panted" for Him, and the Spirit, blowing where He listeth, filled, as it were, the lungs of their souls. Given the conditions, this amazing thing had to be. But the conditions, as we have seen, were perfected by humble preparation. In visiting them, the Spirit was not countenancing malice or cruelty or persecuting jealousy.

There remained nothing in them of the passion which might transform their own blessing into somebody else's curse—their own good into somebody else's evil. The gift which they received was formidable, momentous, even menacing. But they could be trusted—they had become trustworthy.

And I note this. The place where they met was shaken. When God thus enters the lives of men, circumstances do tremble. As in the world to-day, a mighty rushing wind sweeps away the landmarks. Only the flame itself stays steady—un-

flickering amid the tumult, a fiery pillar amid the hurricanes of the wilderness. It is a flame, kindling no longer on nations as nations, nor on priests as priests, nor on kings as kings. It illuminates the faces of your own sons and your daughters, your old men and your young men, and your very selves. It is not mere fancy nor emotion; this flame inspires the heart, through the head; there is no intellect, too educated, no imagination, too brilliant, for this divine and intimate enlightenment. In very truth, this Holy Spirit is, as it seems to me, the one all inclusive miracle or living Wonder that we lack. To want Him sincerely, to await Him with patience, to receive Him in grateful submission is the whole secret of the Life worth living.

VIII

THE GIFT OF ONE LANGUAGE

FROM one generation to another, man has shed man's blood, without fully knowing the reasons why. At a historic meeting in New York, the President of the United States said—and I heard the words—that a world war must continue because a certain nation did not speak the same language as democracy, and this explanation brings us at once to the scenes at Pentecost where language was the problem solved. In many countries,—South Africa for instance or Quebec—a question of language dominates politics. It is of such vital importance to peace and happiness that people of diverse race and religion should understand one another. The first achievement of the early Christians was thus to bring men and women of all national origins into one family. And in a few brief centuries, it was their religion which preserved the unity of Roman civilization, when mere Empire had fallen into fragments.

It is interesting to compare the curse of Babel with the blessing of Pentecost. At Babel, you had one original mother tongue, one grammar, as it were, and one dictionary, but people behaved as rivals rather than comrades—they did not love one another—they did not acknowledge any one Teacher—their hearts drifted apart and their dia-

lects became diverse as their affections. It is love and faith and hope, not syntax, that are the foundations of a better understanding among peoples, and sometimes America has been closer to France through an interpreter than to England by direct speech. When the disciples emerged from their upper room, overflowing with the abundant Spirit of God, Who is love to man, every one they met knew at once what was meant by peasants who had never spoken before, save in the patois of Galilee.

When we were children, we read about this gift of tongues as a strange tale, which might be history or legend, but in either case hardly affected our own lives. A miracle, which left our lessons in French and Latin no easier than before, seemed remote from the routine of the classroom. Some people of a serious tone attended conferences on "holiness," which unfamiliar term we could not define, or joined societies like the Pentecostal League, the solemnity of which alarmed us. Nobody explained to us that at Pentecost, what happened was an outburst of *common*-sense—of good fellowship—what the French call *ésprit de corps.* It was *before* the Spirit came that the disciples spent their time looking upward into heaven or in the seclusion long continued of a prayer meeting held behind closed doors. The Spirit drove these people into the market-place—forced them to become good "mixers"—made them men of the world—with the international mind. Wherever they travelled, they were admirable company. They aroused interest. They had an aim in life. You might agree with them or disagree but you could not find them dull.

About this astonishing event, there was no mystery or concealment. It happened in broad daylight, about our breakfast time. The disciples were not pioneers in psychical research or theosophists or students of telepathy and mesmerism, whose science depends on a *séance* in a dim heretical light. Somehow, it seems as if spiritualism only finds us fascinating when we are dead, but the disciples were concerned with people who still shared with them this present life, with all its pains and limitations. They had small patience with the occult. At Ephesus, they burnt the books which dealt with curious arts and they liked to tell how one poor fellow, with an evil spirit, proved quite too much for the seven sons of Scæva who had a great reputation as exorcists. Simon, the magician of Samaria, was denounced by Simon, the fisherman of Galilee, and Elymas, the fortune-teller of Cyprus, was blinded by the word of Paul, from whose eyes had fallen the scales. Terrible was the censure of the Christian apostle on those who profited by the Philippian girl with a spirit of divination. These perils of the unseen world—these miasmas of the twilight of faith—were never treated lightly by the disciples. They were conscious of spirits, good and evil. They chose the Spirit of God. They believed that if God's Spirit were refused, mankind would not be left in a vacuum; to the Good, there would be always alternatives—perilous and actual.

None was more amazed by what occurred at Jerusalem than the devout or religious people. They thought that if you wanted to find a living faith in God, you should go to some temple or

synagogue, but here was the Spirit, plainly assisting men's talk in the street—or, as we should say, in the tube or subway or restaurant. Neighbours became so companionable that a curious explanation was suggested. They said that the disciples must be filled with "new wine." It was almost boisterous, this happiness,—the kind of joyful-heartedness which friends try to achieve by "treating" one another in saloon or public house. Peter had to tell the onlookers that this was no mere fanaticism or religious excitement. It was an upheaval, thought out long ago, by as cool-headed a prophet as ever foresaw revolution,—Joel, who found poetry and justice in caterpillars and locusts. This was no end of a drinking bout. It was still the third hour. The faith of these disciples rose like an aeroplane by accurately adjusted contact with the breezes. They began the day in the very presence of God, facing the day's difficulties with the dawn. Therefore, it was true in a sense that the disciples went forth, filled with new wine. It was the new wine of the kingdom, pulsating through their veins. In Our Lord's own words, they drank it new, with Him.

Miracles are difficult to many people, but, for myself, I accept them as symbols of things to come. Because Christ healed the sick and restored the wounded ear, therefore, we build hospitals and subscribe to the Red Cross. Because He fed the multitude, therefore do we organize the supply of food and, in time of special need, submit cheerfully to rations. The miracle of tongues gives us the clue to that wonderful development of telegraph and mails and printing which draws together the whole

human race. To-day, there is hardly a language known to man which is not the vehicle for a written Bible and a proclaimed gospel. Statesmen will realize some day how much of peace and coöperation they owe even in secular matters to the international tie of a common reverence for the noblest things in literature. Knowledge of the Bible is a talisman which wins for a man wherever he travels the best of available friends, with the best of available thoughts.

Joel was a man who brought home to us these religious ideas. By the genius of his pen, he made them a part of our family life and conversation. To him, a prophet was not a dim and distant figure in history. Your sons, he said, and your daughters are the real prophets; your young men are the people who will see visions and your old men will be the ones to dream dreams. Ask the boys from the trenches what they thought of God and destiny. Go into the mine and factory and listen to what the workers say. Everywhere it is the ordinary folk who are conscious of the great moment. The old with their memories perceive it because memory is a backward glance at the eternal. The young with their hopes perceive it because hopes also are glimpses forward to the eternal. It is the middle-aged, engrossed in the material, who are apt to be terrified and to cry out in this day of the Lord,—to protest that society is being broken up, that the sun is darkened and the moon is turning to blood—that property will be consumed as fire and vapour of smoke. In a measure, it is true, but it is not the whole truth. For amid the chaos there walks among men, Jesus of

Nazareth,—how intimate that title!—Jesus our townsman and friend—in calling upon Whose name we are safe.

How does Christ save a trembling civilization? What is it that makes civilization tremble? An insecure—a narrow foundation. The basis of society is public opinion and public opinion is precisely as broad and as narrow as the minds of men. In the case of Peter himself, we see how the Spirit gradually overcame deep prejudice and defective education. The apostle started his public career equipped only with the local dialect of Galilee. He could not throw off that accent—in the high priest's palace it nearly cost him his life. Under some influence, which history declares to be spiritual, Peter became as world-conscious as the farmer from Texas or the labourer from Shropshire who left the plough to fight for France and Armenia. He had loved his brother. He had loved his wife—I often wonder whether his was the marriage at Cana—and, as Paul reminds us, Peter liked to have his wife near him on his travels. When his mother-in-law was taken ill, he sent at once for Jesus. But, as time passed, he began to lavish thought and care on people outside his immediate circle,—on Arabians and Africans and Mesopotamians. Yet he did it reluctantly and with lapses into former narrowness. For years, the Gentiles were common or unclean in his eyes and, at Antioch, he did not like to eat with them. As his life drew to a close, however, he wrote letters which are good for all mankind. His first epistle is addressed to the very saints scattered abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, many of whom had

assembled in Jerusalem at Pentecost, while his second epistle is universal.

The disciples themselves had noticed with what unerring insight Our Lord knew the thoughts of the people whom He met. At Pentecost, there was the same diagnosis of character. What aroused attention was not fine preaching to great crowds but casual conversation among individuals. Peter's sermon which followed was only an explanation of the phenomenon. These foreigners had found in Jerusalem what they least expected and that was a friend in need. The Friend did not speak Hebrew to Persians or Greek to mixers; nor did he intone or use special phrases. The disciples conversed in natural terms,—the words that a mother uses when she handles her new-born child. The idioms of Pentecost were the idioms of the day. It was Christian talk, in terms of club and dinner table,—a pulpit theme, with the diction of the press and platform.

Wordsworth tells us that our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting. The new birth is an awakening and a remembering. At Pentecost, the converts rubbed their eyes and said to each other, " Here we are after the nightmare, back in our Father's home, where we have all things common." It is significant that they began at once to drop their labels. They came to Jerusalem, as foreigners come to America, filled with local patriotism, but in Christ they were no longer Parthians and Medes and Jews and proselytes. It is only a side reference that tells us that Paul belonged to the tribe of Benjamin and who knows whether Luke was a Gentile? He was a beloved physician, with one

hundred per cent. loyalty to Paul, the prisoner, and Paul's master. Whatever he had been by nationality, he was now a true man among men.

Becoming all things to all men is not easy. What was miracle at Pentecost became humility in the great apostle of the nations. With infinite self-restraint, he behaved as a Jew to the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks. Deliberately, he got into touch with labour by working as a tent-maker. Here was loving your neighbour as yourself—here was looking also on the things of others. It was an eager, concentrated, winning look. The man, lame from his mother's womb, had never been regarded with such a piercing attention as that devoted to him by Peter and John. The one language of Christ was also the most intense language and the spiritual intuition of the apostles stopped the very heart-beats of Ananias and Sapphira.

Universal, intense, simple—that was the speech of the Spirit. The idea that we talk and write well when we use long words is not of Christ. An evil Church in Corinth hoped to display spiritual gifts by praying in an unknown tongue and even to-day a great Communion holds forth the message in ancient Latin. Much theology is almost as hard to comprehend, and there is a wisdom of words that makes the cross of Christ of none effect. As Paul told Timothy to let no man despise his youth, so, on his own behalf, he let no man despise a childlike gospel. In the presence of God, let thy syllables be few—one is enough for sin. For as Our Saviour still stands at the door of those hearts which He loved unto death, He is content with a brief knock, —merely a knock—which however leaves a stain

of life blood from wounds on a hand not yet healed. That knock arrests our notice, and those who listen as John did for the voice, will hear a sound of many waters, many tears,—a language known the whole world over—flowing with infinite patience and sympathy through every cranny of human experience,—and gathering volume unto itself until like the ocean the voice of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

IX

COMMON OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY

AMID our turmoil of industry it is not easy for us to realize that the early Christians were also bewildered by the contrasts between wealth and poverty. They did not travel in automobiles or surmount the clouds in aeroplanes, but in all essentials the Roman civilization which they had to face was as perplexing as ours. Yet they were simple men who had big things to do, and they could not shut themselves up in libraries to read and to write elaborate treatises on political economy. We ourselves now see that such treatises, however ponderous, are futile as a defense against social unrest. The views of the disciples may have been elementary, but they were none the less as final and inevitable as a theorem in mathematics. These views could be stated briefly, in a few direct and unanswerable pages, to which modern thought has added nothing save an occasional application.

Every day these followers of Christ obeyed Him by studying the Scriptures or Old Testament. Thence they derived the central fact of God, who alone created and alone sustains the universe and whatever lives therein. From this they argued that no man owns property or even himself, but that all of us are by a strict law of inheritance servants, or

as Paul expressed it, bond-servants of the Almighty. It was true that this bond had been reduced to a scrap of paper by the terrific catastrophe which the Christians called sin, but the soul of man, and therefore his property, were redeemed or bought back by no less a price than the actual and precious blood of Christ. This was Peter's phrase, and it followed that since Jesus, who had been rich, for our sakes became poor, we are no longer concerned with the rights, but only with the obligations attaching to whatever we have and are. For our talents, be they few or many, we are only trustees, and as trustees we have to administer our so-called possessions more strictly than if we could call them our own.

The disciples, therefore, did not talk as we do about the resources of a province or the fortune of a millionaire, or the claims of labour. Neither nation nor individual nor classes within the community could thus exercise an ultimate proprietorship. In God alone, wrote Paul to the people of Colosse, do all things consist, and the word sanctification, at which we so often sneer, means that we recognize a legal covenant with the Divine. If we yield ourselves a willing sacrifice, we do nothing illogical or extraordinary, but merely accept a reasonable or obvious service. This was how the Apostle put the case to the Romans, actually living in Rome, in which city was enshrined a traditional respect for public law. It is when man challenges God that he complicates his life and prepares the way for those systems of philosophy which are age-long litigation between rights and wrongs. A straight line is more direct than a maze, and similarly, as Paul told the too sophisticated Corinthians, the foolishness of

God which says so little and says that little so simply yet leaves no more to be said, is wiser than man. Neither socialism nor individualism is thus from the Christian standpoint an answer to the fundamental question of ownership. Relieved of such controversies the disciples were able to devote all their attention to the manifest needs of their next door neighbours. About the wealth of others they did not worry, but they put their own goods under the hammer and brought the money to the apostle's feet. By this act they obeyed the Master, who told the young ruler to sell all he had and give to the poor. If there is anything in what we possess which does not belong in fact to Christ, let us get rid of it—the claim of the poor may be imperfect, but it is a sounder claim than ours. Our rights are limited clearly to the one coat—to precisely what, in following Him we can devote to His service—all this and nothing more. That may include a college education like Paul's, the quiet roof of a house, which Peter enjoyed at Joppa, or a valuable case of surgical instruments for Luke, the beloved physician. On his last visit to Jerusalem, Paul brought baggage and did not hesitate to use ships. In Rome he hired a residence or apartment and entertained company. From the Philippians he accepted fees for preaching. As men learn a lesson at school, so had he learnt to be rich and also to be poor. He knew how to abound and how to suffer need. Even with filthy lucre, he was a man who could be trusted.

The mere sale of goods did not dispose of the duty in respect of them. If one person sells, it means that another person buys, and when Barna-

bas got rid of his estates in Cyprus, probably to a pagan landlord, there is no evidence that the tenants welcomed the change. Christians sometimes relieve their consciences by getting rid of brewery shares. And they do well. But if the breweries fall into less scrupulous hands there may be even worse beer. Also it was at the feet of the apostles, not at the feet of Christ Himself, that the gifts were laid. The operation, when analyzed, was thus only a transfer of trusteeship from some men and women to other men and women. And the apostles themselves, so far from welcoming these added responsibilities, were quick to seek relief from them, appointing the deacons to administer the funds, which deacons may have been in some cases the very men who had made the original bequests. Nor was it a fact that the money, whether given away or received, produced in men and women a Christlike disposition. Simon Magus discovered that you cannot purchase for cash the power of the Spirit, and in Paul's heart it was the Spirit that mastered the money, not the money that mastered the Spirit. Similarly to Ananias and Sapphira a subscription list was a vehicle for mere worldliness. People were invited to applaud the magnitude of the donation, and so forgot how large a balance was still withheld. These unhappy benefactors were like those who sing " Naught that I have my own I call, I hold it for the Giver," while they double not only their contributions to missions but of their garages and music rooms. Also to the Grecian and Hebrew widows, money was a token of the material in life—a subject of rivalry and murmuring, a concession to the flesh. Regarded as an end in itself,

money thus became the root of all evil—whether devil, world or flesh—and woe be to the man who, in the words of Jude, ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward. The idea of Simon Magus that God has His price was only one degree worse than the idea of Balaam that man has his price.

Believing in trusteeship, the disciples did not exact vows of poverty. For Ananias and Sapphira it would have been better if they had not given away anything at all. Cornelius, the centurion of the Italian band, was rich and could travel with two servants to wait on him. At Philippi, Paul did not ask Lydia to allow him to run her dye-house for her, nor did he object to her selling purple clothes to those who wanted to wear purple. On the contrary, he used the dye-house as a place of prayer. At Ephesus there was no objection to a silversmith as such, but Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen must learn that with the march of progress there is a time limit set for shrines dedicated to the goddess Diana. Philemon, though he owned slaves, was still a brother beloved and fellow-labourer, but he must remember that Onesimus, though a slave who had absconded with money, still belonged to the royal family of heaven. James did not object to the rich man with a gold ring coming to church. But the rich man must be ready to sit next the poor man who comes in vile raiment and must ask himself why that man is so poor.

The disciples did not believe in loot. To the Bolsheviki, Paul would write as he wrote to the Ephesians, "Let him that stole steal no more." The sin of theft is not that we take what belongs to a fellow man or woman, but that in the words of

Malachi, we rob God of what He has entrusted to another. At Jerusalem a system of doles did not prevent the church sinking into distress. So indigent were the Judean disciples that money had to be collected for them throughout the Balkan and other communities. The apostles thus insisted upon people doing productive work. Although he was confronted by the momentous struggle between Gentile and Jewish Christians, Paul yet found time and energy to pursue the trade of a tent-maker, which was suitable for his weakened eyesight. Like any other artisan, he earned and lived within his wages, and while the wealthy classes commented upon his mean appearance, he was respected by rough soldiers and sailors. He followed Christ who learned obedience by undertaking no public work until the toil of his hands had provided for a widowed mother.

Men so reliable as the early Christians were bound to emerge from poverty. Laodicea became rich and fashionable. At Corinth they had collections as God prospered them. Labour yielded a surplus, and this surplus, being the increase from God, was a debt due to him that needeth. Since Christ was the ultimate employer, the servant must obey the master in the flesh with the fear, the trembling, the singleness of heart and the good will with which Christ should be obeyed. The master on his side must forbear threatening his servant, since the servant also belongs to Christ. Mastership is just a different form of service, and whatever goods were supplied to the public must be honest in the sight of all men, who are thus granted the same right of inspection that belongs to the all-seeing eye of the

Lord Who is at hand. In several epistles Paul laid down these principles.

Wages must be just and equal—what we call a square deal. The servant might be bond or free, but in either event there must be justice. James did not admit that the poor man in vile raiment is a necessity of civilization. He came of a race which was born in Egypt out of a labour dispute, in which the bricklayers rebelled against the sweating system. As was written to the Hebrews, Moses would not enjoy the treasures so won,—he returned his excess profits—preferring to share the grievances of the workers—which grievances, by a daring and inspired anachronism, the author calls "the reproach of Christ." Imbued with such memories, the Jew held that every family should dwell securely under its own vine and fig tree, enjoying to the full the fruit of toil and only taxed up to a tithe for social and spiritual purposes.

To James, therefore, it is fraud to hold back the wage of a hired man. If, said he, rich men do this, then let them weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon them, for they must explain their conduct to the Lord God of Sabaoth. Because they insisted upon a living wage all round, the Christian clergy were able from the outset to defend a sufficient remuneration for those who preached the Gospel. Since every labourer is worthy of his hire, it followed that thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. After three long years of mental effort, spent in Arabia, Paul knew well by what weariness of mind, by what agony of thought, they whom he ironically compared with oxen, do tread out the corn, which by

God's spirit becomes the bread of life for the world. And he insisted that it should be corn, not wood hay stubble. He was as much opposed to the adulteration of the Gospel as he was to the adulteration of any other commodity. Like everything else, the Christian message had to be provided honest in the sight of all men.

In the early Church, therefore, the industrial problem, though as acute as ours and as baffling to Roman statesmanship, was solved by the uncompromising recognition of God's ultimate claim both to material property and to human effort—both to capital and to labour. This principle was not, however, enough. To the Apostle Paul, happiness, like every other art, had to be acquired and perfected by lifelong toil. He was not born a contented man. "I have learnt," he said, "in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." He was instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. It was a gradual and painful conquest over circumstances—this habit of rejoicing "everywhere and in all things." It was the strengthening of Christ which made the difference between Paul, who accepted poverty, and other Jews who, with the same theory of Jehovah, clung tenaciously to wealth. Without the alternative riches of grace which Paul claimed, men and women will seldom if ever practice the self-denial which Christ taught.

X

THE MIRACLES OF HEALING

MIRACLES are of chief concern not to scholars and theologians who usually discuss them, but to the diseased, the wounded and the defective, for whom pain and weariness are among the facts of every day as it dawns. The disciples were witnesses of those signs and wonders, especially of healing, which they had seen when Christ walked this earth, but they were quick to realize that such miracles had not sensibly diminished the world's burden of sickness and sorrow, and in Paul's immortal words, they recognized that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Entering the Temple, Peter and John at once noticed a man lame from his mother's womb. At Lydda, a few miles distant, there lay Æneas, stricken with paralysis, while to the Christians of Joppa the death of Dorcas seemed irreparable. At Lystra, Paul and Barnabas found another cripple, and when at Troas the Apostle preached long and late in a hot room, Eutychus fell asleep, tumbled from the window and was stunned unconscious. Even in Malta, Paul came across the father of Publius, chief man in that island, who lay sick of a fever, complicated by hemorrhage. It was no imaginary or painless

world that the disciples mastered, but that same tragic existence which we ourselves know and share.

Happily for us, the experiences of the disciples were recorded by a trained medical practitioner called Luke, who knew the organs of the body, as we can see from the terms in which he described the deaths of the Iscariot and of Herod. Luke had learnt anatomy, and could define an ankle-bone. With such an influence in their midst, the disciples reached their conclusions not by argument but by observation. They watched phenomena, and after many centuries their method of scientific deduction has been adopted by every great university. If in some respects their insight remains in advance of ours, it is because, in studying as we do the methods of God, they did not exclude from their calculation a due allowance for God's illimitable power. If God did not always cure the body, He was still able to do it. He handles us, to quote Paul's anticipation of Omar Khayyam, as the potter handles the clay.

The Romans were a people who above all else reverenced law. Writing to them, Paul elaborated the principle which we now universally accept, that our bodies, with all their apparent vicissitudes, are also subject to rule. In his pathology, there is no hint of the anarchist mind. Disease is not an accident, but can be traced to a moral source. The only body that escaped corruption was the slain, yet sinless body of Christ. Under the bondage of suffering, the whole creation groans, and Paul himself, who may have been epileptic, prayed to be delivered from the body of this death. In what we

call the age of miracles, this was his attitude, and he differed from us in one thing only, that his view of pain and death was deeper and more discerning than ours. While defining the laws of God, he also asserted God's sovereignty. Here was a Monarch endowed with the prerogative of mercy. Because He punishes, He can also pardon. Because He condemns, He can also reprieve. Because He passes laws, which all must obey, He can also suspend law and authorize what men will consider to be a miracle. And in certain cases He does this. The object is not that a man here or a woman there should have the material life prolonged for a few years, but that the authority of God over all life may be understood. When people suffer pain, they must have the assurance that it comes to them, not by blind and inevitable destiny, but by the decision of unutterable love. God is strong enough to cure them, but He refrains. Though He slay us, yet will we trust in Him. Without the signs and wonders—the startling contrast to a normal routine—we could never have learnt this lesson.

When Christ ascended into heaven, He entrusted His cause to certain followers. These men were to be filled with the Holy Ghost, by whose power Christ Himself had lived and worked and suffered. To the disciples therefore, Our Lord promised that they also should cast out devils, speak with tongues, live unhurt if they drink any deadly thing, and recover the sick by laying on hands. This pledge is recorded in the final verses of St. Mark's Gospel, which, we are told by scholars, were written as a later addition to the Book. If this be so, we have a noteworthy corroboration of those events which

are narrated in the Acts. Why should the men, who added this postscript to the earliest Gospel, have put in a series of promises if they had never been fulfilled? The phrase, Christian Scientist, is in itself quite accurate. There is no science outside Christ. And it is only the scientific mind that can appreciate the final truth of our faith. The viper that dropped harmless from Paul's hand is merely a prophetic symbol of what the microscope has since discovered. With our every breath we inhale the germs of plague and fever. With every sip of purest water we drink the deadliest poison. Yet, in Christ, we are physically immortal till our work is done, and afterwards, immortal in spirit forevermore. In this Providence, which shapes our ends, there is nothing of hazard or chance. It may be life, or it may be death—we know not which—but in either event, Christ alone is to be magnified in the body.

Every poet—every painter—every dramatist knows that things seen are symbols of the unseen. A dog cannot wag his tail and a cat cannot purr without suggesting affection and pleasure. For centuries, the Jewish people had associated the terrible disease of leprosy, with its contaminations, and its horrible uncleanness, with the idea of sin. When a leper was declared clean, there was a ceremonial not essentially different from those which expressed forgiveness of guilt. In the early Church the power of God unto healing thus symbolized the power of God unto salvation. Hence it is that in narratives like the Gospels and the Acts you find frequent descriptions of miracles, whereas in the Epistles, miracles are scarcely mentioned. The

narratives deal with the approach of Christ and His followers to the world. Through what they could see of signs and wonders, the people were taught like children to understand the unseen. But the letters were written to men and women who had joined the Church. These had experienced presumably that larger miracle by which the soul is changed, and what Paul and Peter and John talked about, therefore, was not a new limb, but a new man,—not a transformation from sickness to health, but a transformation from darkness unto light, from exile unto home, and from evil unto God.

None could have been greater authorities on miracles than Peter and John. Their reminiscences would have been of an absorbing interest. We can imagine how eagerly they would have been sought out by the modern journalist or publisher. Yet, in their correspondence, as we read it to-day, Peter and John are silent on the subject. Yet, as we read their writings, we are not conscious that in their old age they have lost any particle of their belief in and wonder at the manifest power of God. Their minds as revealed are of a piece with their deeds as recorded. And Paul's attitude was equally clear. In the Acts we are told that at Corinth the Lord wrought special miracles by his hand. A mere handkerchief taken from his body became the instrument of healing. Yet when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he says nothing of this, but, on the contrary, tells them how he was with them in weakness and in fear and in trembling, so that they sometimes despised his mean appearance. He was, if anything, too humble, and when they took liberties with him, the miracles came, despite himself,

as if the Master insisted upon the transfiguration of His servant.

I do not doubt that while these things were happening at Corinth, there were people in Judea, and Galilee, who went about saying that the age of miracles had ceased. This was because the only men who worked them in the early Church were the men who could be trusted not to boast about them afterwards. We read that Stephen did great wonders and miracles, but from his speech you would never have guessed it. Paul made more than one personal defense, but the only miracle that he described was the thunderbolt that shattered his own pride. For Timothy, his own son in the faith, and for Titus, he desired every spiritual advantage, but such advantage did not include the power to work miracles. The Corinthians were told to covet earnestly the best gifts, but their hierarchy was to be first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, and *after that* miracles, and then, only then, gifts of healing. The one fear of Peter and John was lest it should be thought that in themselves they had the power to strengthen a deformed foot, while those who would have worshipped Paul and Barnabas as gods, were astounded to see them rend their clothes. Nor did they claim any authority that could be delegated to others. As Simon Magus discovered, here was something not to be bought with money—an incalculable expression of God's supreme and mysterious purpose.

In their endeavour to rid themselves of personal glory, the disciples were completely successful. The Sanhedrin were entirely satisfied that an impotent man had been healed. It is absurd, they

said, for us to deny it, but that fact did not prevent them from seizing and scourging, and even slaying, the very men through whose agency the wonderful works were done. Indeed, it was the miracles of Stephen, as of Peter and John, which provoked the hostility that ended in persecution, and at Lystra, after a miracle, Paul was stoned. At Philippi also, after another miracle, the apostle was beaten, and it was not of the miracle, but of this shameful treatment that he afterwards reminded the Thessalonians, who lived in a neighbouring town. What Paul suffered for Christ was thus a stronger argument than what in Christ's name he achieved, and when he told the Galatians about his conversion at Damascus, he did not mention the scales which fell from his eyes, but his ignominious escape in a basket. Paul never forgot the humiliation of that basket.

We thus arrive at this conclusion—that the final test of goodness is not our ability to escape from pain and death, or even to secure such an escape for others, but to suffer these things—to suffer them with Christ. On one occasion, when he was arguing with the Corinthians, Paul was, as it were, driven to boasting. But in what things did he glory? In miracles? Not at all. He spoke about labours more abundant, stripes above measure, prisons more frequent, deaths oft. Of the Jews, said he, five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once was I stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I have been in the deep. He mentions journeyings often, perils of waters, perils of robbers, perils by his countrymen, perils by the heathen, perils in the

city, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, perils among false brethren. He confesses to weariness and pain, to watchings often, to hunger and thirst, to fastings often, to cold and nakedness, and finally, to the burden of care for all the churches. Thrice he prayed that the thorn in his flesh might be removed. These prayers of Gethsemane were unanswered. The grace of God, which began with the healing of the body, was only made perfect in the body's weakness. The power of Christ which could command health was most gloriously displayed amid infirmities. By a miracle you may learn His Omnipotence. By endurance you learn His love and comfort,—not the abolition of weeping, but tears wiped away. Christians were people who came out of great tribulation, and only through all pain did they arrive at the God of all consolation.

Some men are not moved by miracles. It was the Jews who required a sign, while the Greeks sought after wisdom. Some minds are religious, others are secular, but for Jews as well as Greeks, Paul preached Christ the Power, and Christ the Wisdom of God. Though no miracle was performed at Athens, he said in thrilling words that God was not far from any of them. Where millions overlooked the spectacle of pain, in the hearts of the disciples it evoked sympathy. Thousands had passed the lame man at the beautiful gate of the Temple. Until Peter and John came, none had looked earnestly on him and gripped his hand. Thousands of prisoners had been scourged in the prison at Philippi. Until Paul and Silas came, none had had their wounds bathed by the Gov-

ernor. Reckless of his own health, Paul was tender as a nervous grandparent of Timothy's frequent ailments. He warned him against drinking water and told him to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. And when Epaphroditus was dangerously ill at Rome, Paul felt that his death would bring sorrow on sorrow. He did not forget Trophimus, left sick at Miletus. On no occasion did the apostles fail to lay aside all other work when the sick needed attention. Nor did they ever deny the reality of suffering. On the contrary, in the catalogue of heroism which you find in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the climax is not centered on those who stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, and escaped the edge of the sword, but on the others who were actually tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection than that of the body,—of whom the world was not worthy.

Hence, it was the practical mind of James which formulated the policy of the Church towards the sick. He approached the problem from the material and the spiritual standpoint, both together, not one without the other. On the one hand, a sick person should be anointed with oil, and it is here curious to remark that the oil of James, with the wine of Paul, were the remedies applied by the Good Samaritan to the man who fell among thieves. About that oil there was no particular magic. There is no suggestion that it was consecrated. It was a simple secular remedy. It was the initial step in all that has since been discovered by our physicians and surgeons.

But the oil was not enough. Prayer came

first—a prayer reaching the mind and conscience of the sufferer—a prayer which anticipates all that we now know of the value of suggestion in the treatment of disease—a prayer for forgiveness as well as cure. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man, says James, availeth much—availeth much, but not all. There remains the supreme partnership of the Almighty, with whom alone lie the issues of life and death. "I am in a strait betwixt the two," said Paul, and God alone knew which would be best. But in either event the determining factor was to be Christ magnified in the body, which body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Himself.

XI

MUTTERINGS OF PERSECUTION

THE disciples lived in an Empire which extended as one political organism from Britain to Persia and embraced the shores of the entire Mediterranean. The secular historian could record an era of unbroken political peace and in Europe, Asia and Africa, therefore, the missionaries could travel about freely, without once encountering the interruption of foreign war. If the apostles discovered the seething turmoil which already threatened the foundations of Society, it was because they moved less among statesmen than among the common people, and looked below the surface of institutions, direct to the unsatisfied human heart.

There was no obvious reason why the cause of Christ should come into collision with the civil power. If Bethlehem was His birthplace, it was because Joseph and His Mother went there, obediently, to enroll their names in the Roman census, having refused to be drawn into the revolt instigated by Judas of Galilee, where they lived, against the still heavier taxation imposed by Cæsar Augustus. They avoided also the similar insurrection of Theudas which occurred about that time. In later years, the Master Himself had paid what was due, both to Rome and Jerusalem, saying that we should render unto Cæsar the things that are

Cæsar's, by the same obligation with which we render unto God the things that are God's. His followers, however enthusiastic, were not permitted to make Him a King. Deliberately rejecting the temporal power, grasped later by certain Christian Communions, He declared that His Kingdom was not of this world—that He only desired to reign within the heart of man. He declined to appoint James and John, or indeed any of the apostles to be Ministers of State, nor would He add His signature to any charter of an earthly régime. Finally, He submitted without complaint to a series of trials which culminated in an atrocious miscarriage of justice.

After some initial hesitation, the example of Our Lord was followed by His disciples. Over religious observances like circumcision, Paul had his differences with Peter, but over the duty of obedience to kings, governors, and the higher powers, the two leaders were agreed. Anything less than such obedience was "the ignorance of foolish men"—resistance to the ordinance of God Himself. If private vengeance was forbidden, it was because the Lord will repay, and repay through rulers who bear not the sword in vain, being appointed to execute wrath on them who do evil and, for this very purpose, to collect tribute. In enumerating the fruits of the Spirit,—love, joy and peace—Paul adds, with a curious care, that "against such, there is no law." Born a Roman citizen, he used the fact, both at Philippi, where illegally they had scourged him, and at Jerusalem, where they had proposed so to do. Appearing as a Roman citizen before Festus, he appealed unto Cæsar; and when

the High Priest ordered him to be struck on the mouth, he did indeed rebuke him, but immediately apologized, because no one, however provoked, should speak evil of the ruler of the people.

One would have thought that a creed so inoffensive, a practice so determined on submission, would have been appreciated by the state as an ally and an assistance, yet within a few days of Pentecost, the struggle between the disciples and the constituted authorities under which they lived had become acute. Peter, destined as he knew for crucifixion, was asking whether he should hearken unto God or man. And after the passage of years, Paul wrote of an audience with the Emperor, to whom he had appealed for justice, as a deliverance from the mouth of a lion. Finally, we have John, describing the civil power as a beast having seven heads and ten horns—and on his heads the name of blasphemy—a beast like a leopard, with a thirst for blood,—with the feet of a bear, the mouth of a lion, and the impulses of a dragon. In his vision he saw Babylon the Great as Mother of Harlots and of abominations of the earth, and whatever be our interpretation of these majestic symbols, it is clear that the reference was to the organized "powers that be" which—ordained by God—had somehow sold themselves to the Devil.

Often we are told that the Christians drifted into trouble with the authorities because, in their awkward fidelity to principle, they declined to serve in the Roman army and worship the deified Roman Emperors. These offenses may have arisen in later years, but not one hint of them is to be found in the New Testament. Cornelius was indeed converted

as a centurion, but he was not required to lay aside his armour; while, at Lystra, Paul and Silas were stoned, not because they refused to worship the pagan gods, but because they would not accept such worship from pagan men. It was this very humility of the Christians that laid them open to ill-treatment. If Peter and John had claimed that by their own power they had healed the cripple, no one would have objected. By thus appropriating credit they would have conformed to the general standard of the time. Like other people, they would have set themselves up to be somebody and while rivals might have been envious, it would have ended there. But when they assigned all virtue and authority to Christ, society was conscious of the implied rebuke. Men instinctively felt the challenge of the Cross, and united to resist it. If Christ alone was to have glory, then the entire system of what is called "getting on" stood condemned. If Christ alone could save, then the best of us, without Him, is lost. If Christ alone is Master, then every other knee must bow. It was not a clash of one system against another. Under any system the conflict would have been the same. The disciples did not criticize the abuses of Roman society; they did not explicitly condemn even slavery, and so far from denouncing the Jewish form of worship, they observed it. All they had said, years later, was that, for example, in the institution of marriage, a bishop should have one wife. For the rest, whatever results followed from their teaching, their aim was not to overturn the world, as men imagined, but to live separate from its evils. They simply refrained from iniquity, and did good.

Yet persecution arose—the persecution accurately foreseen by Christ. The ill-treatment of Christians, carefully analyzed, was, from first to last, an outward symptom of the struggle in the very souls of men which was set up when Christ was preached. As Peter spoke near the Temple, some of the multitude were pricked to the heart; when he repeated his appeal, what had been a mere prick became a wound,—they were cut to the heart —or, as we would put it, they were *cut up* about it. At Christ's trial not one voice was raised in His favour, but after His death, we see how, at Pentecost, His cause began to make progress. Many repented—changed their minds—and entered into happiness. Others, like Saul of Tarsus, kicked against the goad, became furious with pain of conscience, and in their delirium turned on their spiritual tormentors. The converts, even numbered at five thousand, were a mere handful, but the verdict against the Redeemer was no longer unanimous. They did not all forsake Him and flee. There were now two sides to the question.

Persecution by the Jews was religious; by the Romans, it was political; but the root of the mischief was the same,—a hatred against any act or word which demanded or suggested the control of Christ. They would not have this Man to rule over them. In many communities such persecution continues unabated to this present day. Those who know Latin countries tell us that a Catholic may turn atheist and nothing will be said. But let him declare for Protestantism and it may cost him his place in society and commerce. A Jew may and often does drift into rationalism, but let him confess

that he is a Christian, and he also will hear of it. Thousands of Moslems are now secret disciples, coming, like Nicodemus, to Christ by night. The rejection of the Messiah and His ultimate murder, to which Peter refers in his addresses, did not constitute one drama, done with at the historic Calvary. It was continuous. It goes on in the twentieth century. Christ is still misjudged. He is still scourged. He still bleeds. He still dies and is still buried. He still rises from the dead and ascends unto heaven. Like Pilate, men still try to wash their hands of Him. Such were the Athenians or the æsthetic community who, secure in literature and art, mocked and procrastinated at the preaching of Paul. Such was Felix, who, engrossed in the compromises of politics and the hopes of his career, put off the day of decision. Such was Gallio, who, trusting to his sense of humour, drove the Christ from the judgment seat—the place of serious consideration—merely meeting the issue with mimickry of the neighbouring parson. Others thought and thought rightly that the claim of Christ, however diplomatically presented, must turn the world upside down. They were not to be deceived by camouflage. Peter might hanker after the circumcision but his conservatism did not conciliate the Jews. What did they care that Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin, of the strictest sect of the Pharisees, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, if, with this, he had sold himself as bond-servant to the Galilean? He might shave his head at Cenchrea. To keep the peace at Jerusalem, he might bind himself with a Nazaritic vow. But none of these concessions to the Jewish practice counted one jot when they

realized that, at heart, he, with all his familiar Hebrew phrases, belonged to Christ. And in the final diagnosis of his case, Rome in her turn judged him, not as a Roman citizen, which citizenship passes away, but as a man, a pilgrim and a stranger, whose citizenship was in heaven—whither he was, in consequence, forcibly deported.

Yet rightly understood, the Christian Gospel was and is the one alternative to revolution. The Temple was not a mere chapel or synagogue—it was a national institution. Citizenship was represented by the Sanhedrin or Parliament. Harps and trumpets yielded music. The very dances had a sacred meaning. Lepers came to the Temple after healing. Mothers brought their babes. Art revealed the Cherubim, and that golden vine, on which Christ uttered His parable. There were corridors for debates. There were altars for repentance; and money was made in the Temple, where also money was given and spent, while in the Temple was justice administered. Destroy the Temple and society was shattered. And the Temple was destroyed, not by an earthquake, nor avalanche, not by volcano nor yet by flood, but by the deliberate hand of man. Like the Châteaux of France, the Tuileries of Paris, the Library of Louvain and much of the Cathedral of Rheims, the great landmark of Jerusalem disappeared under the blows of human violence, and even Titus could not save this one of the seven wonders of the world.

Why was the Temple in such danger? Was not the gate called Beautiful? Were not the services ornate? All this was the fact. But none the less was it a fact that there were people outside the

Temple who would not or could not enter in. They did not hear the music. They did not understand the law. They did not share in the finance. They did not admire the embroidered seraphim or cherubim. At the brazen altar, they confessed no sin and received no pardon. At the mighty laver, their bodies were unwashed, their habits uncleansed. No prayers of theirs suggested incense. They found in the shew-bread no symbol of God's care. His seven golden candlesticks illuminated no darkened recesses of their prejudiced minds. Truly the veil of the most holy of holy places had been rent in twain, but they knew not that they might freely enter; the priests had not torn the veil, but God; it was torn from top to bottom; and the priests disapproved. Hence the ark remained a mystery. People could not perceive in the very being of God, the Law of the Fatherhood, the Blossoming Rod of the Spirit's authority, and the ever available Manna, coming down from heaven, which revealed the Broken Body of Christ.

Of the men who were thus excluded from the Temple, two supreme examples emerge into history. Both were crippled from birth, but the one was a cripple in body, while the other was crippled in mind. The first was met by Peter; the second by Paul. Both were led within the barriers. Both were thus rescued from those classes in the Empire whence spring revolts and anarchy. Yet, in both cases, society persecuted the deliverers for the good deed thus done. Peter was haled before the authorities; so was Paul; and Paul's arrest culminated in his death. To Trophimus, the Ephesian, he had said, "Why bow down to Diana? Why worship

the goddess of plenty, of success, of selfish and luxurious living? I will lead you into the true temple of the eternal." But the Jews would not obey that ideal of God's fatherhood which suggests that men are brothers. All the fury of racial antagonism, never more apparent than among nations of our time, swept Paul into prison. And from that day to this the barriers between Jew and Gentile have remained mitigated indeed, but still virtually impassable.

The other man is nameless and therefore universal. While he lay outside the door stood open. The reason was not his poverty, for having no silver and gold, Peter and John could none the less enter the Temple. And the alms which the man received were no compensation for his helplessness. He lay there, the tolerated parasite on the community. Whether received as dividends or as benevolence, his maintenance was a degradation, because he did not earn it. It was not his fault that, born a cripple, he had reached the fatal age of forty. But it was his fault that as a man of forty with weak ankles, he made no effort to use brain and wrists which were good for another thirty years. Peter did not look at his ankles nor grip his feet. He gazed on the man's face—the divine part of him—and gripped his hand—which was strong as ever. In an instant it was clear that no man, however old and weak, is entirely useless. Self-knowledge—of the new strength—led to self-reverence,—he rose up—and self-control,—he could walk and leap and praise God—anything but stagger and stumble. He could go into the Temple. Wounded in the war of life, he found a vocation.

Of course, the authorities did not like it. Why had they never noticed the lame man? What would happen if public opinion was concentrated not on high priests and rabbis, but upon the poor and afflicted? As the Virgin Mary had prophesied it would raise the beggar from his dunghill and put down princes from their thrones.

And this thing happened at the hour of prayer—the ninth hour—the very moment when Christ died, and dawn succeeded the darkness of His sufferings. Christ's resurrection was proved, not by historic argument merely, not by the empty tomb, but by His present power—which, as the rabbis declared, "We cannot deny." There were kindly friends who could and did carry the cripple daily to the Gate Beautiful. All honour to them. They were the founders of what, in modern language, we call Social Reform. But their service, in itself, was not enough. When all that they could devise had been accomplished, the cripple still lay outside the region of personal happiness. Silver and gold could not buy it. It was something beyond the reach of political economy. It lay within the sole prerogative of God Himself.

For this charter of happiness had to be countersigned by the one name, Jesus Christ. In the healing of this man we see all that the kindest and best of men can do for one another, followed by just that something more which is the very essence of the poet's insight—the painter's insight into the human drama. That something more is the gift of Jesus of Nazareth alone. No system, however benevolent, can supply it. And, in such revelations of His power, "Jesus of Nazareth," as Peter called Him to begin

with, is glorified, until He is recognized as Son of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,—the Holy One—the Prince of Life and all that life means. The Jews admitted the good deed but denied the divinity behind it. They wanted Christianity; they rejected Christ. Their quarrel with Peter was essentially the same as the quarrel between Morality and Salvation, between Ethics and the Gospel. Their's was the anger of men who desire Another's good without confessing their own evil.

XII

THE JUDGMENTS OF THE SPIRIT

IT was from the Jews and their old books that most of us learned to look at nature as a garment of God and His enemy, the Devil. Sun, moon and stars, which He ordained,—rivers and flowers and even beasts—teach us what He is and what thoughts He thinks. Among these symbols, the terrors of nature are included, and the most sudden of these is lightning. Pentecost was the warm summer of the Church, when from a cloudless sky shone the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings; it thus was inevitable that with such spiritual electricity, a thunder-storm should break the spell and relieve the abnormal strain. Two persons were killed—the man, Ananias, and his wife, Sapphira.

Their tragedy does not stand alone. It is our own custom to declare that, in a certain event, we should have "died of shame." What goes on in the mind has turned people's hair in a week or two from black to white. The kind of stroke which fell on Ananias and Sapphira proved to be almost as fatal to Paul, when he fell nearly dead and wholly blinded, on the road to Damascus. His exceeding madness, the rage which consumed him, the hatred that impelled his pitiless march under a tropical

sun at the zenith of midday, set his entire being under a strain which snapped some vital element and laid him, helpless, in the dust. Resistance to the Holy Spirit sets up a tension between man and God of which the effects are incalculable.

These rules are as clear as dynamics. Herod, the king, was in poor health. What he needed was quiet. Any doctor would have said that he must not be disturbed. His life depended on the peace of God. But he stretched forth his hands to persecute and killed the apostle James. He proceeded to imprison the apostle Peter. The two men who could have helped him most were thus treated as enemies. His fury grew hotter until it included the people of Tyre and Sidon,—boys and girls and mothers and humble workers, who had done no harm to the king. They also wanted peace, merely to be left alone, because the king's anger stopped them getting food, and they secured peace by making Blastus, the king's chamberlain, their friend. I do not know by what arts or offers they won over Blastus, but Herod, his irritation soothed, fell victim to a new restlessness. He must needs choose a day to wear his royal apparel, to sit upon his throne, and make a speech to the multitude. His pride provoked him to that fatal effort. As his words rang out, presumably over the vast theatre, they shouted, "It is the voice of a god and not of a man." Once more the electric tension culminated in disaster. Whatever weakness had been Herod's, the disease declared itself in all its loathsome reality, and his claim to God's glory ended in consumption by worms.

Ananias and Sapphira were situated in comfort-

able circumstances. They belong to what we call the bourgeoisie and they discussed together what should be their attitude towards the economic movement which was sweeping over the Christian community. They arrived at the conclusion that if they gave away a part of their fortune they could safely keep the rest. Their doctrine was identical with the proposals for "ransom" by which, in the eighties, Joseph Chamberlain hoped to solve the difficulties between those who want and those who have. Ananias and Sapphira were fighting, as Joseph Chamberlain fought, for absolute ownership. Given such absolute ownership over what was left, they were ready to part with much.

No such compromise could last. If any property belonged to God, then God owned all property, and, be he rich or poor, man is God's trustee. About the private affairs of Ananias and Sapphira, rumours began to gather, as clouds develop on a sultry afternoon. They claimed a certain reputation, but somehow, compared with others, they had not paid the price. They had been generous, but they were not poor. They had given all, but there was a good deal left.

The other Christians would not have minded if Ananias and Sapphira had frankly disclosed their financial position. What aroused criticism was the deception which they practised in their accounts—the concealed items, the clever bookkeeping, the disputable valuations. Controversy arose. It is clear, I think, that hard words were used on both sides, and, to Ananias and Sapphira, it must have seemed to be nobody's business but their own. When Peter heard of it, however, he realized at

once that the entire cause for which Christ died was at stake. If the finances of Christ's followers were suspected, untold prejudice would arise against His Gospel. If Christ had not mastered the purse, He assuredly had yet to conquer the soul.

This was the setting of the dramatic scenes which followed. The disciples were in full assembly. Yet there was no hubbub or disturbance. Feeling ran high, but the affair was left to Peter. Having given up all himself to serve Christ, he had a right to deal with this matter. We read that he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and any man, thus filled, is irresistible. In the very intensity of his restrained indignation, in the judicial lucidity of his questions, especially to Sapphira, we see how formidable this man, once so weak and uncertain, had become.

Ananias entered. His was an honoured name, borne by the most illustrious in the land, including the High Priest himself. Hananiah, as the Hebrews spelled it, meant "The Lord is gracious," and we can easily imagine why the mothers of Israel chose this name for the delicate and cherished babes who lay on their breast. But the graciousness of the Lord means that the Lord is also Truth. The tenderest-hearted of all prophets was Jeremiah, yet even he, when confronted by another Ananias, who prophesied an early breaking of the Babylonian yoke, had to reply, "The Lord hath not sent thee, but thou makest this people to trust in a lie." That earlier Ananias was "cast from off the face of the earth," because he "taught rebellion"—not against Babylon, but—"against the Lord"—against the strict probity of God. "Thou shalt die," said Jeremiah, and Ananias, the first, did die the same year, the

seventh month. It was the end of his easy and unconvincing ministry. There was but one step from Ananias, the false prophet, to Ananias, the false priest. The one spoke untrue things. The other smote on the mouth Him who spoke true things. So fatally unpopular is reality.

Thus entered Ananias, not as a prophet, not as a priest, but as a certain average ordinary man. He was entirely unconscious of danger. He expected his usual welcome. He was the man in the golden mask, the hypocrite, and on the instant he met the man whose mask had been torn aside by Christ. Peter was simply sincere. He looked straight at the heart of the other and found there Satan—the enemy—filling the heart, as Peter's heart was filled with the Spirit. The battle was immediate. The two mightiest forces of the universe met in single combat and the soul of Ananias was set free. But his body fell under the blow. No physical tissue could survive the wrench and wrestle.

To those who watched the event, one word went home. It had seemed to them, perhaps, that theirs was the grievance involved in the deception of Ananias. It was against the other disciples that apparently he had offended. It was they who had the obvious right to take him to task. Yet Peter put the case far otherwise. Against the Holy Spirit and Him alone, said he, was this sin committed. Among those for whom Christ died, there is, from man to man, no injury beyond human forgiveness, since He, as Man, forgave our injury to Him. But, while thus forgiving such injuries, we have also the right to say that whatever wrong is done against us or anybody else, is a wrong against God, and

against God not man is done any wrong of which we are ourselves the author. This concentration of the issue robbed the aggrieved Christians of their *locus standi.* It made them realize that their feelings were a very subordinate factor in the affair. So near were they drawn to God as an actual person that their hearts were filled with great fear.

In the literature, even of the Bible, there are few more dramatic and musical sentences than this—*And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out and buried him.* It was a few grave bars from the funeral march of the merely respectable in Christianity. Through every century we see one generation after another arising, with the fear of God on their faces, and winding the corpse of the unrealities of religion in those prejudices which cling only to the dead, and carrying away the dead things from the sight of the living, and burying them in the oblivion which engulfs the shams and pretensions of a world yet to be won for truth. So have disappeared estimable persons and venerable societies. The young men have stepped in and what is other than eternal has vanished.

While Ananias was to be engaged in Church matters, his wife had her other duties, but in three hours she was to call for him and she kept the appointment. Among the disciples, Sapphira is, perhaps, the most forlorn and pathetic figure. She was her husband's jewel, brilliant in name, in beauty and in fortune, yet utterly devoted to the man who had fallen. Not having heard the news, she came in, with an inquiry on her lips. Peter's first remark to her was an answer.

The spectacle of this woman,—a happy and con-

tented wife as she thought herself, transformed that day into a discredited widow—gave pause even to the most impetuous of apostles. What had been indignation in Peter turned to pity, as he said, "Tell me"—how courteous the tone—"tell me, did you sell the land for so much?" Brought to bay and unabashed by the terrible silence of those who looked on her from every side, Sapphira declared—"Yes—it was so much." Then and then only did Peter ask her why she had conspired with her husband to tempt the Holy Ghost. Her face, I think, must have paled. Over her must have fallen the shadow of immediate death. For Peter added, what he had not said to Ananias, a pronouncement of doom.

"Look!" he cried, "the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door and shall carry thee out." She fell at his feet straightway; she yielded up her spirit; in her person the moral obligation of all women was proved to be not less than the moral obligation of all men. She was buried by her husband,—united in life, undivided by death, —one in spirit as one in flesh—their end the most poignant, the most deplorable of all written romances.

XIII

THE SHORT LIFE OF STEPHEN

THE early Church was only a few weeks old when the apostles were faced by the first of many minor worries. The momentous struggle between Christians of Jewish and Gentile origin began, not in theology or creed, but in the petty suspicions of the ordinary human heart. The Grecian widows declared that the Jewish widows were favoured in the distribution of ecclesiastical benevolence and, in a moment, the lofty ideals of love and joy and power, proclaimed by Peter and his friends, fell to the sordid level of dollars and shillings. It was nobody's fault. The number of disciples was greatly increased. Clearly there were bound to be difficulties of organization.

The apostles met and discussed the affair. Their view was that this wrangling among women merely interrupted important matters like preaching the word. Over the whole business it is clear that they were not a little impatient. It seemed absurd that men, qualified to occupy the most prominent pulpits, should be troubled like this with bank-books and the price of groceries. They proposed therefore that their own pastorate should be entirely relieved of these domestic distractions. A clergyman and minister of the Gospel must be a man removed from the ills that afflict the rest of us. Deacons

must be appointed who will act as a kind of body-guard for the spiritual recluse. It is the theory on which Buddhists have hidden away the Dalai-Lama of Tibet. In monastic institutions and universities you find the same principle adopted. And some of our greatest preachers have lived quiet and remote from the life around them. It is so convenient to delegate routine and perplexity.

No man enjoyed theology more than Paul did, or had a better right to the use of a study. But Paul, like Christ, sacrificed leisure and his splendour of intellect to the humdrum duty of going about doing good. Paul never made Peter's mistake of thinking that humble folk and humble tasks are common or unclean. He knew something of the eternal want of pence which afflicts genius. But when they said of him that he was preaching for money he took up his trade again and so gloried in Christ's "form of a servant." When the Corinthians got into troubles of various kinds Paul did not avoid the situation, but went into it thoroughly, even with tears, and drew out of each squalid detail a rich disclosure of the Christ-mind. If these widows had been received by the apostles and their circumstances examined, a common ground for Jew and Gentile might have been discovered in the policy of dealing with the economic problem which lies outside ecclesiastical dispute. A good feeling might have been promoted which would have forestalled the crises that soon arose over circumcision and other Hebrew ritual. The daily ministering or service was thus as vital to the progress of the Church as any discussions of doctrine which were to occupy so many minds. And it was the weapon of financial

comradeship that Paul used later in his final attempt to unite European and Judean Christianity.

Those were days when the Church was a perfect democracy. Every man and every woman was summoned to the mass meeting where the issue that had arisen must be decided. The assembly reminds one of those "congregations" which Moses and Aaron and Joshua addressed. The utter candour of the apostles—the unreserved confidence with which they left the choice of deacons to a company that was admittedly divided by racial and religious origin—was rewarded by the unanimous selection of seven suitable men, of whom, however, none was Gentile, though Nicolas, the last to be named, was a proselyte of Antioch. Matthias, the twelfth apostle, had been chosen, as we have seen, by lot, but there was no need now to employ a game of chance. Voting was superseded by consent—by a thinking together of all good men—and notable was the spread of the Christian movement. The plan whereby the disciples were treated as citizens of a spiritual republic, rather than as subjects of a spiritual empire, was abundantly vindicated by results. The town's meeting, the referendum, women's suffrage,—all these foundation stones of the modern commonwealth were laid securely in the charter of the Church.

Yet one can detect in the narrative the tiny seeds of those very different upgrowths of which the most impressive is the Roman hierarchy. The multitude selected deacons, but actual appointment lay with the apostles. The apostolic claim was made visible to all men by the laying on of hands. I can imagine no more exquisite symbol. Every child, however

young, who comes to Christ, is thus ordained as His disciple. Paul thus reminded Timothy that, even as bishop, he also must ever regard himself as a son of the faith. As the Holy Communion taught the brotherhood of men, so did the laying on of hands express the fatherhood of God, who, knowing their frame, remembers that even popes, even prelates, are, after all, but dust.

Neither on the apostles nor on the Seventy Evangelists did Christ lay His hands. So deep was His love that He emphasized friendship and coöperation rather than mastery and subservience. In considering the ceremony, we must bear in mind also that it was not a new ritual, but a severe curtailment of the old. On the minds of many priests, the Saviour's personal teaching—so we are told in the fourth Gospel—had made a lasting impression, and these men, silent during His crucifixion, were joining the Church in large numbers. They lived centuries before books were printed. They saw few pictures and no photographs. Elaborate ceremonies were their language—the act seen by the eye supplemented the word which only enters the ear. In the direction of simplicity, therefore, the apostles, by merely retaining one simple rite, went a long way, and the only question is whether, like the author who wrote the Hebrews, they should have avoided all compromise and found in the Spirit everything which had been foreshadowed in ancient type. It is enough, perhaps, to remark that one charge against Stephen was his alleged indifference to ancient custom.

Again, the need for deacons showed that apostleship was not a sufficient organization of the Church

—laymen also had to be enrolled for responsible co-partnership. Women were overlooked, but not for long; Philip, the deacon, had a house at Cæsarea and all his four daughters prophesied. Events were showing that no structure devised by man could contain Him Whose Being overflowed the heaven of heavens. And, in a few weeks, two of the seven deacons, appointed to serve tables, far outshone in their witness the appointing apostles. Philip was the pioneer of foreign missions in whose footsteps Peter followed, while Stephen surpassed Peter's eloquence and anticipated Peter's heroic martyrdom. John used to say that Jesus knew what was in man. The twelve apostles had little notion what was in Stephen and Philip; and still less of what was to be revealed through Paul.

Of all the early Christians Stephen was the greatest, and Paul, who was a party to his death, spent his life in the constant endeavour to be with painful effort what Stephen was. About this man there was an easy and joyous mastery over his duties, his opportunities and his dangers. He was of honest report. He was full of the Spirit, and his spiritual gift was, in the first place, wisdom; secondly, sound sense—which sobriety of mind controlled him, even in his eloquence. He was the ideal man of affairs, the business man, the artisan, who knows the world by experience and is respected therein. He did not set out to perform miracles of helpfulness; as we read of them, we are not conscious that he made an effort. His power, as it were, could not help acting. It was a spontaneous force. In a word it was God.

As the apostles summed up the historic or eye-witness to Christ, so Stephen summed up the wit-

ness of men who have never seen Him. He was the first of the moderns. Hence his interesting collision, not with the priests at Jerusalem, who were too secure in their orthodoxy to realize the challenge of his world-wide message, but with the synagogues of the provinces, Cyrene and Alexandria in Africa, and Cilicia, and Asia, where the ancient faith was fighting for a distinctive existence amid oceans of Paganism. Cilicia was where Paul came from. To that angered synagogue of Cilician residents in Jerusalem he belonged. And to him as to the Libertines, or freed slaves, a gospel that appealed to every class and every creed opened the floodgates. It was the end of all things.

In dispute or argument Stephen was led, perhaps without knowing it, along a path already trodden by Christ. He spoke of the larger Temple, of the deeper law, of the nobler custom, and he was accused of blasphemy. Jerusalem, like Ephesus, flourished on a religious monopoly—on having that to give which men could not obtain elsewhere—and Stephen wanted human happiness to be as free as the air we breathe. He and his critics both realized that whatever limited the love of God must be destroyed. That love is "broader than the measures of man's mind," and man's mind, therefore, unassisted by the Spirit, could not comprehend Stephen's message. Threatened with loss of narrower interests, the multitude was easily stirred against the reformer. The priests and the scribes welcomed the popular reaction and Stephen was seized and brought before the council.

Here, indeed, was an unforeseen outcome of the quarrels over a widow's mite. The man appointed

to keep accounts, lest Peter's preaching be interrupted, stood at the bar of Parliament, alone, without one apostle to advise him, assisted only by the Holy Spirit within him. Before his aspect, the tumult ceased, for as they looked on him, they were fascinated by his face as of an angel—a messenger —some one who had something to say—something that must be heard. It was the eagerness of Pheidippides, as he hurried off with his news of victory, and, hurrying, fell dead when he had spoken.

Of himself, Stephen was unconscious. To that first person singular, he did not once refer. What concerned him was the situation,—the fate of these people around him, not his own—and he analyzed that situation with the calm impartiality of a scientific historian. At first reading, his speech seems merely to recapitulate the Old Testament, and one might suggest that such a defense by a prisoner, arrested on the capital charge, is unparalleled in its detachment. But there is in this narrative a subtle emphasis which brings out those things that make or mar the happiness of men and nations. Stephen told how, wherever the Israelites lived and wandered, whether in Charran, or Egypt, or Canaan, or Midian, the God of glory,—the God who shows Himself—was watching them and waiting for their obedience. Abraham and Moses and Joseph and Christ were figures in one drama, acted in many centuries, in which what mattered was not so much the environment of the people,—the famines and the bondage and the oppression which they suffered —as their own heart and character—what they worshipped, be it God, be it an idol—the treatment by that nation of its own best men. What prophets

have been slain? What Spirit has been resisted? How stiff is the neck and is the heart uncircumcised? All this was gathered from the Jewish Scriptures themselves and it proved that nations, like men, are a duality—an opposition of good to evil—which meant that in slaying Jesus Christ the Jews were acting according to their boasted heredity. It was no new saying that God dwells not in temples made with hands. Isaiah himself declared that heaven is God's throne and earth His footstool.

Up to this point the argument was interesting. People will always admire an academic sermon which leaves themselves untouched. But there came a point where Stephen had to bring his story up to date. He made no claim for Our Lord except this—that He was the Just One—that He was incarnate innocence—that as a blameless Man, He had been betrayed and murdered. And this accusation, based deliberately on Our Saviour's humanity, avoiding deliberately His divinity, drove them to a madness which led them to gnash their teeth on him. On their faces lay their verdict.

Then and then only did Stephen proceed from Jesus of Nazareth, our Brother and Friend, to Jesus of Nazareth, standing at the right hand of God. What had been history became experience,—what had been memory passed into vision—what had been faith became sight. All around were the evidences of Christ defeated. Straight above was the spectacle of Christ triumphant. Jesus standing—not then seated—but in authoritative and alert activity—standing because Stephen had to stand,—he could do no other.

The gnashing of teeth was a suppression of anger; their loud cry broke the last restraints of wickedness. These men were not deaf. They had listened and heard. But they dared not hear more. They stopped their ears. They rushed upon Stephen. They did not risk one moment of delay. They might be Libertines, or Cyrenians, or Alexandrians, or Cicilians, or Asians. They might be people, elders or scribes. But as adversaries of Christ, they were as completely in accord as were the disciples themselves. The unity of evil was concentrating against the unity of good.

They hurled Stephen out of the city. In their society—their clubs—their theatres—their churches, there was to be henceforth no direct witness to the Redeemer. Then, they used against Stephen new arguments,—namely stones; the unchanging material against the developing spiritual; the hard and unsatisfying and lifeless rock against the living word, the food of the soul. In their heat they threw aside their clothes. All those phylacteries and broadened borders which recalled the traditions of their race were thrown on the ground and the Jew emerged as, after all, a man of like passions with the rest of us. And a youth, named Saul, thought sincerely that he could look after the discarded robes of their respectability and return them, unsoiled by a stain.

Stephen did not ward off one missile. He knelt on that same earth. He was the only man there who knelt—the only man there who prayed. And his prayer was, in effect, the last of Christ's seven words on the Cross—Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

The hail of human hate continued, when—as it

seems—Stephen remembered the first of Christ's words, and in haste, as it were, lest his final duty be left undone, he cried loudly, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,"—and only when he had said this, only when he had prayed for his enemies and persecutors, did he fall asleep, like a child, when the child's vesper is said or sung at a mother's knee.

So ended the martyrdom of Stephen. Great as this act was, supremely great, it was less, infinitely less, than the Cross of Christ. Of the seven words uttered by the Saviour, two only were repeated by His servant. And those were the two words which were spoken, the one before and the other after, the mystical darkness that symbolized the atonement for sin.

XIV

THE PREACHINGS OF PHILIP

WITH the death of Stephen ended the revival at Jerusalem. Where there had been great power and great grace and great fear of the Lord, we now read of great persecution and great lamentation. Devout men, sorrowing as those who have no hope, thought chiefly of Stephen's burial and of a sepulchre in Jerusalem which could never again be empty. For the first time since Pentecost the dynamic Church paused, became static, engraved its virtues on a tombstone, yearned for elaborate mausoleums, carven images for the departed, even relics and souvenirs. There was no Paul to tell them, as he told the Thessalonians, that Christ risen would bring back Stephen, when He returns. Then, as now, the want of such comfortable words left the disciples to the enslaving paraphernalia of elaborate mourning.

With Stephen thus slain, it was clear that every duty to Jerusalem had been discharged by the witnesses of Christ. For that democratic and popular murder, priests and people were consciously responsible, and not one hint of regret was afterwards suggested. Anticipating this situation, Our Lord told His gospellers that, when persecuted in one city they should flee to another, not for safety, but be-

cause every city has a right to learn the love of God. Hence, the good news would be proclaimed, first in Jerusalem, next in Samaria, and finally throughout the world. Manifestly, it was unjust that the gift of Christ should be limited to one community, and especially to a communty which rejected the ambassadors. This, however, was the policy pursued by the apostles. They were bound by old associations. They clung to Jerusalem. Years later Peter was still to be found there. And inevitably the guidance of the movement passed out of their hands. From this time onward history was made at Samaria and Antioch and Ephesus and Athens, while the influence of Judea brought little but trouble and reaction.

Battles are not won by red tape in a department of war, but by the soldiers who storm the enemy's trenches. There is no flame in a prairie fire save where it advances. While Peter was content with a Church centralized in an ancient but obstinate city, Saul as a persecutor knew better. Among his Cilician friends he had listened to Stephen, apparently in silence. His will was, perhaps, undecided as he accompanied the mob which drove Stephen from the city. He cast no stone. He only held the clothes of others who did this. He did not instigate cruelty, but only consented thereto. Yet he was already tortured by that remorse which led him later to confess that he, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, was chief of sinners because he had maltreated the Church of God. He went through Jerusalem, making havoc of the homes where lived the disciples, dragging men and women into the streets and committing them to the pitiless guardians of the prisons.

In every age it has been the discomfort at home—the oppression of an old country—some intolerable social grievance, which has driven people forth to new lands and scenes. So it was here. And as the disciples were scattered abroad, to Antioch, and even Damascus, so did Saul hurry forth, realizing by instinct where was the strategic point in the conflict and thus foreshadowing his subsequent career as Apostle of the Gentiles. Right or wrong, Saul was ever a leader of shock troops.

It was Philip the deacon who first went forth as foreign missionary. By that decision he became inevitably more important to the progress of Christ's cause than all the twelve apostles who stayed behind. In Luke's opinion, Philip became at once a person worth writing about. He was a Jew with a Greek name, which means "lover of horses," and this suggests a man of movement, activity, well able to seize opportunities when they arise—interested in a chariot as it wends its way through the desert of Gaza. In due course, the example of Philip was followed by Barnabas and Silas and Timothy,—most remarkably by Paul himself. So far as we know, Philip received not one word of approval from the ecclesiastical authorities. Possibly he thought that it was useless to seek it. It was not until years later that foreign missions were authorized by a Christian Church, and the Church was itself a foreign mission, being situated at Antioch.

Philip was a born pioneer. He started on his wanderings without any plan, finding himself first in Samaria, then in Gaza, then at Azotus and finally at Cæsarea. If he began preaching in Samaria it was because every road to the world beyond lay through

that province. Doubtless it was an enemy country. No other Jews would have dealings with the Samaritans. But the universal mission of Christ was impossible unless Samaria was first included. No campaign of love was to be conceived if prejudice and revenge lay firmly entrenched, as before, on the lines of communication. If Jesus was the comprehensive Man, it was only because He had been called a good Samaritan. Since He had visited Samaria, His disciples must be ready to follow in His footsteps.

On the bitter quarrel which still divided the two neighbouring races, Philip, as a preacher, said nothing. About the rights and wrongs of the Samaritan schism, he expressed no opinion. His solution for international differences was neither war nor arbitration, but Christ; and he preached Christ. He told them what Christ was, and he left it at that. In the presence of Christ, they forgot that he was a Jew. With one accord they listened to him, and there was great joy in a city where, so far as we are told, there was no subsequent reaction against the faith. Among states and societies, a new standard was erected. In the larger claim of Christ all previous controversies were swallowed up.

The secret of the regeneration of Samaria was, in reality, quite simple. The quarrels with Judaism had been dialectical; differences of mind and temper. Unity was established by dropping argument and attending to the poor and the weak. Between Samaria and Jerusalem there was no essential difference. In both cities there were men with unclean spirits—paralytics—cripples—maniacs. Between these rival cities there was thus the indissol-

uble bond of pain and disease and sorrow. Ove this or that matter they might contend like children but in suffering they must needs be partners. T the miserable and the diseased, therefore, Phili devoted himself, and with a zeal which astonishe and a power which was manifestly not his own.

From Jerusalem to Samaria is a distance of abou forty miles or two days' walk. But the minds o the apostles were preoccupied with more importan matters doubtless than the first great extension o Christ's Kingdom, and no word of what was goin on reached them until many converts had been bap tized and a new Church founded. Apparently i was thought then, as now, that one missionary Sun day in the year is ample. When, however, rumour of the change in Samaria reached Jerusalem, ther was evidently a great stir, and it was held tha Peter and John should proceed at once to investi gate the matter. I sometimes wonder precisel what would have happened if Peter and John ha suddenly arrived, let us say, at Ephesus, to investi gate the labours of Paul. But, at Samaria, wher the city was filled with great joy, it is clear tha Peter found that things, in his absence, had no been quite as they should be. It was true that Go had honoured Philip by using him to work mir acles. But it was parenthetically observed, as kind of afterthought, that in Peter's opinion, th Holy Spirit had not been received. This was obvi ous because, according to Peter's ideas, the Hol Spirit could only be conferred by the apostolic hand and Philip was not an apostle.

Instinctively we feel that the glory of the reviva was checked by an ecclesiastical ceremony. Th

spectacle of these Samaritans—hundreds of them—kneeling humbly before Peter as a condition of full spiritual blessing, perpetuates much Jewish and anticipates some Christian ritual, now venerable but by no means accepted by all who honour Christ. The man who understood the Samaritans was Philip. Wisdom would suggest that Philip should continue his good work, in his own way, without interference. The way of Samaria would not be of necessity the way of Jerusalem. In Jerusalem Christ talked in the Temple; in Samaria, He sat by a well. Also the national memories of Jerusalem and Samaria were opposite.

Peter was not long in command before serious trouble arose. There was a man named Simon, who had practised sorcery for money. His influence had been unlimited. Small and great had believed his power to be of God. When Philip preached Simon displayed a rare humility of mind. He gave up his magic. He submitted modestly to baptism. We are told in definite terms that he believed. Watching the works of Philip, which were no mere form, it never occurred to Simon to offer money. His frauds and shams were expelled by the good and the true.

Christ tells us that the Spirit bloweth where He listeth. If proof of this be needed, we shall find it in the later happenings to Philip. No man has ever sought to purchase a hurricane with money. But when Simon was told that the free Spirit of God is conferred mechanically by the act of laying on hands, his ill-regulated mind assumed that possibly, as in the case of marriage, or a funeral, or an indulgence, or a mass, some fee would be required.

Peter was horrified, and rightly. In an instant his soul leapt to the essential truth, obscured by the ceremonial, that the Spirit is " the gift of God " and not the gift of man. The form might be paid for and often has been, but the substance never.

To Ananias and Sapphira, Peter's words were simple, courteous and fatal. To Simon, he used strong language, which was weaker in effect. Vindicating truth is one thing; denouncing the corruption of a form is another. Simon was, of course, gravely to blame. But he had not enjoyed Peter's three years of close association with Our Lord. He was a man, struggling feebly from darkness into the light. He had been misled by a symbol, which had meant one thing to him and quite another to Peter. Obviously, he could have no part nor lot in laying on hands. Obviously, his heart was not right in God's sight. Obviously, he should repent. Obviously, he was in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. But obviously that was not the gospel which Peter was sent to preach. What had won Simon was the love of Christ as displayed in Philip, and only that same love could constrain him from evil.

Simon's answer was imperfect. He thought less of the sin than of the punishment. But no man is entirely lost who asks another to pray for him, and there is a humility in Simon's rejoinder which indicates that Christ had made an impression. For he was seeing this humility of Christ in Philip. The successful preacher and worker of wonders had been roughly superseded. As apostles, Peter and John were now the people who mattered. They testified, which means, I think, that they told how

they had lived and walked with Jesus, when on earth. They preached the word of the Lord. And they then returned to Jerusalem. While Philip was to go forth to added conquests, Peter and John were unwilling to speak even in the villages without keeping in touch with their geographical and traditional headquarters. Then, indeed, they did take up Philip's task, but, by that time the pioneer had gone, once more, far ahead.

Philip was hardly the man who, like Paul, could combat the conservatism of Peter and, in Samaria, the battle for an autonomous, self-governing Church was not to be fought. A second time, the evangelist wandered forth, unrecognized, calmly surrendering to others his immense personal popularity. Ultimately Philip settled at Cæsarea, where Paul visited him, accompanied by Luke, and we can imagine how they talked over the curious enterprise of which we have next so graphic a description in the Acts. Once more, it is made plain that Philip was guided by no man, however lofty his station in the Church, but by an angel of the Lord, a direct mandate to himself alone,—not of necessity a bright and beautiful being with wings, but an unmistakable messenger from God,—a word, a hint, a recognized command. We read that he arose and went. In an obedient progress he escaped whatever emotions may have troubled him.

Twelve apostles had remained at Jerusalem, yet it had been possible for a statesman of great eminence to travel a thousand miles to that city, seeking the Jewish Messiah, without hearing even the name of Jesus. At that period Peter was resolutely opposed to offering Christ to such out and out Gen-

tiles and the gospel of Isaiah, who lived centuries earlier, was far in advance of the practice of those who led the Church. It was in the ancient prophecy that the Ethiopian Eunuch, the son and victim of Africa, sought and found the saving of his soul. As his chariot rolled along the road to Gaza it seemed as if this man were leaving behind him the one chance of coming to Christ. He had sought without finding. He had knocked at a door which the Church neglected or refused to open.

To reach that desert road, Philip also had to pass through Jerusalem. He stayed not one moment there for salutations with the ninety and nine who safely lay within the fold. What was a divine purpose at that moment seemed in Philip only a blind instinct. He went forward, knowing not why. Presently he overtook the cavalcade of the Ethiopian statesman. In colour, in upbringing, in language, in social position and in dress, there was an utter contrast between these men. We can see how hard it would have been to speak of Christ to the Ethiopian freely in an ordinary church. His home was the open sky. To put him in a pew would have made him as awkward as to make him wear shoes. Get into his chariot—share his thought—go at his pace; those were Philip's instructions. Philip ran to him and listened to what he read. A student himself of Isaiah, Philip was fully equipped for what had to be done.

The Lord High Treasurer of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, was a man of courtesy. He took no offense at Philip's sudden question, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He admitted at once that he needed a guide. Of the immorta

fifty-third chapter of Isaiah he could only ask the question, still put to us by modern scholars, "Of whom speaketh the prophet thus? Of himself or some other man?" What we discuss in whole libraries, with an infinitude of technical terms, this Eunuch summed up in a dozen words. You have there the evidence of the inquiring yet courageous mind—not assertive, yet able to arrive at results—the fine simplicity of intellect which men acquire when they are in company with Jesus of Nazareth.

From that same scripture Philip preached Christ. He began what he had to say precisely where the mind of his hearer had been baffled. For a man who was studying Isaiah, he did not turn to the Psalms. But Isaiah was only the first word. They did not leave off talking until they had reached baptism. As the moment of parting drew near, we seem to detect a note of loneliness in the behaviour of the Eunuch. Was he to go on alone, into the darkness of an African court, with nothing to bind him to the incomparable Friend, of Whom Philip had told him? There was water—why could not he also be baptized? The rite was not imposed; he desired it.

To Philip the only condition was a belief with the whole heart. No creed had to be learnt; no creed was in existence. Even with such belief, he said, not "thou must," but "thou mayest." Baptism became a blessing, not a burden. The font was a desert pool. The whole universe was the vault of that cathedral. "I believe," said the Eunuch, "that Jesus is the Son of God."

And on that belief he acted. By commanding the chariot to stand still, he interrupted his journey—

suspended his business—so that the whole cavalcade knew that something had happened. Their amazement may be imagined as they watched the great man in his robes descend from his chariot and walk, side by side, with the dust-laden wayfarer who had so recently joined him. In that water they were no longer men of diverse race and position, but brothers, and when Philip held in his arms that Ethiopian, he declared for all time the ultimate brotherhood of the human family.

From that moment the Spirit caught away Philip and the Eunuch saw him no more. If he went on his way rejoicing it was because he had in his chariot another Companion. It was made clear that this dark-visaged convert belonged not to the evangelist but to the Christ alone. No human hand was ever laid on him. No ecclesiastical authority suggested that his reception of the Gospel was incomplete. The act in that desert was sole and complete—a distinct arrangement and reconciliation between God and man,—with no intermediary whatsoever. Philip was found not in Ethiopia, but at Azotus. Thence he made his way northward to Cæsarea, and there, probably, he married. Yet, while Cæsarea was only sixty miles from Jerusalem, the world still lay beyond, untouched. There were ships in the bay, but Philip stayed on shore. Even Paul had already reached Damascus.

XV

"SAUL OF TARSUS DIES"

HERE, then, we have the situation on that decisive morning when Paul marched on Damascus. The good news of a risen Christ was spreading, but under no definite guidance, and neither Peter's steady conservatism nor Philip's evangelic fervour made up for the lost statesmanship of Stephen. Neither in the ordained twelve apostles nor in the six surviving deacons was there the man to grip the problem which confronted the Church. Stephen was dead, and it was this very death of Stephen that secured for the disciples the incomparable service of a repentant Saul.

With every breath Saul seemed to pant out threatenings and slaughter. He personified those passions which cursed mid-Europe with thirty years of brutal war, which wrecked the unity of Ireland, and massacred the innocent of Armenia. Tyranny is not a system but a sin,—a lust for rule over others instead of an acceptance of the one rule over all—and this despotic temper is often served by a rigid conscience in ordinary morals. A man's self is a royal court where there may be and usually is a decent etiquette. When Saul was against the Christ he yet lived a blameless Pharisee. As monarch and usurper, his will acknowledged the discipline of lofty station. He was trained, as a prince

of righteousness, in the most perfect manner of the hereditary law.

Saul had been educated at the feet of the greatest rabbi then living in Jerusalem. When the Christians were brought before the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel presented in faultless language the age-long case for toleration. If the cause were of man, it would come to naught, but if it were of God, how could any one overthrow it? Therefore, let them leave the disciples severely alone. The fallacy in the compromise lay in this—that the Christian movement was not simply divine. It was also human. Our Lord was man as well as God. And in men, His power, as God, was revealed. As those discovered who argued with Stephen, you could not be sure that a triumphant Church would leave the old Temple standing. Saul was driven to conclude that there was not room in the same world for an unrepentant Sanhedrin and a missionary movement inspired by Christ. You could not assume, as Gamaliel did, that one side would prosper without the other side dwindling. The very synagogues were slipping away. Gamaliel's theory was all right for those men who were ready to accept the verdict of history. But a verdict by default did not satisfy Saul. He would fight the case.

By methods which may have included torture, Saul compelled many Christians to blaspheme the Saviour's name. Over towns and villages in Judea, he set up a terror which recalls the achievements of Torquemada. But already the spiritual influence of the Gospel was spreading beyond the temporal limits of the state. No geographical realm can ever wield the power exercised by universal good battling

with universal evil. How was Jerusalem to stamp out a faith which had reached Damascus? In Derbe and Lystra and Iconium, we shall see later how Judaism, bereft of the regular law, had to adopt lynching and riot. Civilization can control many things, but not the wind and the weather, the Spirit of nature, sweeping where it wishes.

Saul's enterprise was frankly illegal. The city of Damascus was held by a governor and a garrison, acting under the sovereignty of King Aretas. The place was therefore beyond the jurisdiction of the High Priest and the Sanhedrin. Yet they gave letters of authority to Saul which suggested that in the synagogues of this distant city he should stir up trouble against the disciples, who were to be seized by mere force and dragged in chains to Jerusalem, there to receive the punishment which no governor would care to administer in Damascus herself. This proposal did not shock the rulers of the people in either place. When Saul turned Christian, the governor in Damascus apparently took the side of the Jews against him. But, with responsible officials so acting in that and other eras, the common people lose confidence in the law and order on which society must be based. In the flame that leaped from heaven, those scraps of paper in Saul's wallet were consumed to ashes. His secret treaties, his private denunciations, his *lettres de câchet*, all the subterfuges of despotism—vanished in the smoke of an awful revolution.

When Saul was drawing near to Damascus, the sun rose in the heavens, sultry and threatening. But he would not halt. As they looked on the city, lovely in the foreground as a mirage, Saul knew

well what scenes awaited his arrival—the wailing of children, the shrieks of women, and the groans and cries of tortured men. In that dark mind at that dark moment was summed up the age-long agony of tyrants and persecutors who feel themselves the pain which they inflict on others. If Saul had been proof against such emotions, if so good a man had actually done so deep a wrong, anarchy itself would have been preferable to a *régime* so cruel.

A light shone around him—a light from heaven—from heaven the region of happiness—which happiness is the test of all policy among men. Saul suddenly realized that that light was truth. Above and below, there was one will to be done. Nothing was to be inflicted on an earthly home which would be out of place in those regions of joy which surround God's throne. Saul fell to the earth. Temples and synagogues, traditions and policies faded from his mind. He was back in the elemental dust from which he sprang. He was to answer for his conduct not to priests and rabbis, but to the Everlasting Himself.

In the voice that spoke, Saul did not immediately recognize Jesus of Nazareth. But we who have before us the Gospels must needs detect those unmistakable accents—the fondness for calling His sheep by name—the unerring use of a question—the exquisite choice of simile and parable—the tender appeal from the bad in man to the good. If literary evidence counts for anything, here was a conversation, manifestly authentic by both parties.

Christ's aim is always to put life on a basis of common sense. Before He blames men, He asks

them *why* they act as they do—*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* If a child is cross and naughty, what is the reason? It is science applied to conduct. It is making men think as accurately about themselves as God thinks. What is behind this treaty? What is the motive for this war? Why are millions constantly made miserable? Let statesmanship explain itself.

Saul's reply was characteristic of the governing class to which he belonged. The question itself did not matter. The only point was who put the question. The sweated worker, the manacled slave, who asks why he is persecuted—the humblest disciple who asked—would have received from Saul a very different answer from that given to a voice of high authority. "*Who art thou, Lord?*" inquired the persecutor. He respected not man as man, but the position enjoyed by man. Show him a true authority, and he would obey.

The utterance, which follows, reached to the very soul. "*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*" It was as if He had said "Jehovah Jesus"—God present as Man—wherever Man is persecuted. Inasmuch *as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me.* Gamaliel had warned his colleagues not to begin a fight against God and, following this thought, the Voice added, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." It was a comment which Saul never forgot when he told the story. Other details he might paraphrase—never that.

There, lying on the ground, he trembled—too astonished to speak. Those who were with him saw the light, heard speaking, but not apparently

the actual words. They also were silent. At last, Saul found a few syllables. For his conduct, he advanced no excuse. He left that account for the Crucified to deal with. He turned that instant from past to future. "*Lord,*" said he, "*what wilt thou have me to do?*" And the rejoinder was Saul's only punishment. He must arise,—recover his self-respect; he must go into the city—continue his usual occupation; and in the city he must receive God's orders from the men whom he had hated and despised. To all men, it must be made plain that Saul meditated wrong and had changed his mind. The disciples in Damascus must be vindicated.

But that measure of reparation was not all. Against the disciples, Paul had offended, but he had also been unjust to himself. Only a madman would have tempted and compelled others to tempt the perils of that midday sun. When Saul rose from the ground, he was a blind man and had to be led by the hand. Whether he ever fully regained his sight is doubtful. His indifference to nature and scenery was complete. In writing letters, he was always largely dependent on a secretary, and some have told us that the Epistle to the Galatians, which seems to have been an exception, was inscribed painfully in a big and clumsy caligraphy. His health continued uncertain. His face was disfigured. And his very name became intolerable to him. "Saul" meant "asked for"—the man sought after—the king who is head and shoulders above his fellows. But, as Paul, which means "little," he became less than the least of the apostles and chief only of sinners.

When, in later years, the Apostle used the phrase

"buried with Christ," there was never a doubt what he meant. For three days, mystical as those of Jonah and of Our Lord, he lived, dead to the world, seeing no one and neither eating nor drinking. In those days, he did in very fact put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man. Yet such change of mind, such repentance was only the beginning. Saul, buried with Christ, must also rise with Him. He must pass from death, not into corruption, but into life. His must be years of constructive service and sacrifice, not years of emaciation and self-reproach. Flagellation, the hair shirt, the miseries of the fakir, the brooding of the spiritual hypochondriac must be corrected at once by the plain duty of "doing."

XVI

THE VISION OF PAUL

THOSE who have read the tragic story of Armenia will understand with what fears the disciples of Damascus heard that Paul was in their city, armed with a commission to bind all who called on Christ's name. With the horrors of arrest and deportation hanging over them, these families passed each day in suspense and doubtless the views of Ananias, their leader, were typical. That man would never have forsworn his soul's allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth. No maltreatment, however cruel, could drive him from his faith. But his vision, which should have included conquest, was limited to tribulation. To his mind, men had their various labels,—national and ecclesiastical—which there was no power on earth to alter. The Jew must always be a Jew—the Moslem always a Moslem—divided Man could never be united in one brotherhood. The attitude of Ananias towards Saul exemplifies those ineradicable divisions which have depopulated the near east and disintegrated countries like Ireland. A Church or a Nation, guided by Ananias of Damascus, may be sublime in defense but it will be stationary. Standing firm, it stands still.

Between sins against God and sins against men,

Ananias drew a false distinction. He could forgive the victim of intemperance but he could not pardon the author of atrocities. He had realized the Christ Who touches the leper. But the Christ Who prays for His persecutors was as yet beyond him. Ananias knew that Saul was in the city. Of the letters from Jerusalem, he had also heard, and this means that he must have been aware of the grave trouble into which his ecclesiastical adversary had fallen. Christ told him, as He tells us all, that we must do good to those who despitefully use us, but from this duty Ananias deviated. He did not bring himself to meet Saul. He avoided the street named Straight.

It was partly because Ananias was so full of Saul's ill reputation that he failed to realize how greatly Saul needed a friend. To this stricken man, food had been offered, doubtless by Judas, his host, but somehow he could not eat. What he yearned for was sympathy and it was just here—in sympathy—that Judas was lacking. Saul's host was the kind of admirable man of whom we know nothing except his address. Little mattered about him except the roof over his head. He was good but his goodness was institutional. For children, he would have provided an orphanage; for the sick, an infirmary; for the aged, an almshouse. Into his benevolence he did not bring the human touch. As Ananias was to learn, the human touch only comes after the divine vision. Love for man is our expression of the God who is Love.

Telepathy is this sympathy,—this human touch—acting at a distance. Some years later, it was to be telepathy that would bring Peter to Cornelius.

It was telepathy—the wireless of the soul—that brought Ananias to Saul. In this case, as in the case of Cornelius, we see a profound desire for help, on the one side, met by a profound reluctance, on the other side, to render the help. In both cases, the plain commands of Christ had to be supplemented by visions. The Almighty found it easier to secure obedience from men when they were semi-conscious than from men whose faculties, including an undisciplined will, were fully awake. In both cases, the mind had to be liberated from the impedimenta of circumstance ere it could leap gloriously to its appointed goal. It is neither magic nor mystery but the truth of God and His poets to say that we are such stuff as dreams are made of.

What God commands is not always the same. He is at once Conservative and Radical. To Saul, who went wrong, the Voice cried "Halt!" To Ananias, who never went at all, the Voice said "Go!" In Damascus to-day, the best known street is still called Straight. It was to Damascus what the Rue de Rivoli is to Paris, what Fifth Avenue is to New York, what Holborn is to London. Any house in the street called Straight was a landmark. The Voice did not suggest that Ananias should inquire *for* the dwelling of Judas. He would be acquainted with it already. Having arrived there, he must ask, *in* that dwelling, for one by name, Saul of Tarsus. The wording of the narrative is here exquisitely ironical. It suggests that, of course, Ananias could not have known of this Saul of Tarsus or he would have hurried to him long ago.

At this command, Ananias opened the floodgates

of his objections. So many people had talked to Ananias about Saul. Ananias was governed by what in these days we call the newspapers. In the bazaars of Damascus, the arrival of the persecutor had been, as it were, written up as the sensation of the day. Special correspondents had cabled from Jerusalem Saul's record. Scareheads filled the press. But what God said to Ananias was "Go thy way!"—not the way of the editorials but "*thy* way"—the way that you alone can tread, to an end that you alone can see. Let the world do exactly what it likes and say what it pleases; for you there is one street called Straight, and one house where Judas lives and one man in that house called Saul of Tarsus, who is in distress over his eyes.

While Ananias hesitated, the vision of Saul had already o'erleapt the barriers. This latest disciple had seen the love of Christ constraining even one of his victims to come to him with a message of reconciliation. As Saul prayed, his belief in Ananias grew beyond the belief of Ananias in himself. He saw Ananias coming to him before Ananias was willing to come. He saw, but not by sight, and it was in those hours of blindness that he coined the favourite phrase of his,—about our walking in faith.

Ananias had to be taught that the people who do most evil in the world are the people who could do most good. The very fact that Saul was a persecutor meant that he might be a chosen vessel. His very enterprise in reaching Damascus suggested that he would be the man to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. His masterful audacity was the very quality that would enable him to

stand before kings. His Pharisaic zeal made him the ideal missioner for Jews. Having been cruel to others, he would be the more likely himself to suffer gladly the tribulation of Christ. All this was explained by the Voice with a patient lucidity which, in the end, won the entire assent of the disciple. He argued no further but went his way; his way was now clearly seen to be the street called Straight.

Statesmanship would have suggested that a blind persecutor is less dangerous than one who could see. Before arming Saul with the weapon of sight, surely Ananias should have sought evidence of his change in heart—surely he should have demanded surrender of his credentials from Jerusalem. But there is no condition to the approach of a true friend. In that brief walk with God down the street called Straight, Ananias had already become a bigger man. We do not find any incongruity in one so recently timid now displaying so notable a courage and power. He did not argue with Saul or demand confession. Whatever had been Saul's humiliation was a sacrifice for God alone. Ananias came as a comrade—laid his hand on Saul's shoulder, and said "*Brother, receive thy sight.*" Know us more perfectly; for where knowledge is perfect, there can be no hatred. To know all is to forgive all. In that revelation of what, in Christ, man can be to man, Saul's prejudices fell like scales from his eyes. He arose, ate, drank, was refreshed. It was his resurrection. In brotherhood, he found a career.

Merely to change his opinion about Christ and to find in the disciples a company of good and lov-

ing people, was not enough for Saul. If you are not to be against the Saviour, then you must be for Him. To Saul, conversion included membership in the Church. Baptism meant that this membership was public. Nothing could now happen to the disciples which did not involve Saul in the risk. The community in Damascus was, perhaps, an unduly silent Church. Its policy was caution. But where others would have criticized that Church, Saul made good whatever was lacking by himself preaching. He did not avoid the difficulties of the old faith by starting a new one. It was in the established synagogues that he began by proclaiming the Son of God. Nor did he dally or hesitate. Whatever could be done for Christ here and now, that thing he did at once.

By such immediate action, he anticipated many perplexities which otherwise might have arisen. He did not wait to explain his position. However astonished might be the multitude, and numerous their questions, Saul treated his own personality as negligible. Like Ananias, he appeared to grow with the greatness of the new thoughts which filled him. With an authority far other than that of the chief priests, this man seemed suddenly to dominate Damascus. Here and at Jerusalem, he who had listened so intently to Stephen was able to confound the Jews, and especially the Grecian proselytes, with Stephen's arguments. He was resuming Stephen's life-work.

Between Jerusalem and Damascus there were doubtless important differences. One was a religious and the other a commercial city. But in one place as in the other, men's hearts behaved in

the same way. A diverse environment did not materially alter the inner motive. In Christ was Life; apart from Him was Death; and resistance to Him turned somehow to murder. Whether at Jerusalem or at Damascus, the Jews conspired to kill Saul.

The murder of Stephen had been applauded, but in Saul's case it was deemed more prudent to attempt at Damascus a secret assassination. Already, the Gentiles—the common and despised people—were forming themselves into a body-guard for Him Whom the people had heard gladly. Religion must lie in wait, therefore—must work its will through a Holy Inquisition—must strike suddenly in the dark.

At Damascus, with a curious prescience, they watched the walls and the gates. It was not that they suspected Saul of cowardice. Every day as it came disproved that. But they knew that he was already taking the world for his parish. He was not a man who would care to fight merely a local battle, nor would he needlessly risk a life that belonged to Another. Like the bravest of soldiers, he was not ashamed to take cover. For Christ's sake, he would consent to appear ignominious. He would suffer even ridicule. And loud was the laughter that arose in Damascus when it was discovered one morning that Saul of Tarsus—the favourite pupil of Gamaliel, the Pharisee of Pharisees, the Terror of the Nazarenes, the companion of priests and rabbis—had escaped, the previous night, in a basket. It is just possible that the Christians, left behind, experienced a sense of relief.

The discussions had been heated. First, was

this man Saul the same man as Saul of Jerusalem? Or was he an impostor? Could it be that anybody in modern times would accept the eternal claim of the Christ? And secondly, was this alleged Messiah of Nazareth the same Man as the Messiah of Psalmist and Prophet? Was the old hope still translatable into new and actual phrase? These were issues on which men were ready to kill one another and be killed.

As we shall see, Saul did not go immediately to Jerusalem. After leaving Damascus, he spent three years in Arabia. It was only after this long period that he returned to the capital. During that three years, the metropolitan Church had advanced not one step beyond what I may call the Ananias frame of mind. Peter was there, so was James, the brother of Our Lord, but neither they nor any other disciple except Barnabas was willing to shake the hand of Saul, and Barnabas came from Cyprus and Antioch. It needed the foreign missionary thus to liberalize and inspire the congregation that had never travelled. As Saul told the Galatians, he owed nothing to any of the twelve original apostles. After obtaining the necessary introduction, he did indeed stay fifteen days with Peter and he secured an interview with James. But—here as in Damascus—his preaching aroused sanguinary resentment and the disciples were glad to get him away to Cæsarea. And thence he sailed, his career apparently ended before it began, to his home in Tarsus.

XVII

THE VISION OF PETER

WITH Saul the persecutor changed into a disciple, and with Paul the propagandist safely shipped to Tarsus, the Christians in Judea, Samaria and Galilee could at last breathe freely. Suddenly the Church militant became the Church at rest. The only fear was the fear of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit of power and conquest and wind and flame fell quietly on men's souls as comfort. Numbers increased, statistics were quite satisfactory, and every pew was full. The churches were edified, or built up. It was the kind of period that produces great architecture. As chief pastor or bishop, Peter was admirable. Indeed, he was already an Archbishop, for even Galilee acknowledged him. He went everywhere, and his finger guided every decision. Unless Peter approved, no one, however powerful or wealthy, could call himself a Christian, and Peter's approval was strictly limited by ancient rules and traditions. As Philip was first of the great Protestants, so Peter was first of the great Catholics.

It happened that Philip was still working at Cæsarea. His very daughters were preaching the Gospel. In the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch, no

problem had arisen because this inconvenient person had betaken himself to Africa, and had been thus segregated. But in Galilee of the Gentiles, an interest began to be displayed in Christ by men and women who were not content to live in spiritual exile. One of the best known residents in Cæsarea was a Roman officer of the fashionable Italian Regiment, who was at once rich, generous, and devout. He and his household, which included private soldiers of the Roman army, were Christian in every sense of that word, but they were refused recognition because they had not submitted to Jewish rites. They were in much the same position, therefore, as Episcopalians who cannot get into communion with Roman Catholics, or Baptists who cannot get into communion with Episcopalians, or Quakers who cannot get into communion with Baptists. No argument could be more plausible than Peter's. Christ was a Jew. He had said that He came not to destroy the Law but to fulfill, and He referred to the Jewish Law. He attended a synagogue. He worshipped in the temple where He observed the feasts. It was not easy to see that the Risen Christ had fulfilled these things, that He had been Himself the Law and the Sacrifice, and that in Him are all our obligations summed up. Without Christ, nothing of all these matters, and therefore in Christ they are all subordinate.

In Paul, as in David Livingstone, we find the genius of restlessness. He was born to travel. Whenever he reached the coast, he was ill at ease unless he could find a ship. Brought up in Tarsus, which was a leading seaport in the Levant, he showed the same passion to cross the ocean which

animates the modern aviator. Christ did not discourage such pioneers. On the contrary, He appealed to men for enterprise. He valued and He claimed initiative. "Yes," He said, "go—go into all the world—but go not for mere pleasure of going, but with an object, and let that object be to carry Me with you." Indeed, the main difficulty with Peter was that he did not go quickly enough. He was too anxious to remain at the centre, while the circumference was broadening—to live aloof from the spread of the faith, a venerated prisoner of the Vatican. After Paul had spent three years in Arabia, had preached in Antioch, and in Damascus, and when he was evangelizing Cilicia, Peter had not got beyond Joppa. He still lodged in the house of one Simon a Tanner.

Like other ports, Joppa was a rough place. And no part of Joppa was so unsavoury as Simon's stockyard where beasts were slaughtered and their skins removed. Yet such industries had to be carried on by somebody. Simon the Apostle had once been Simon the Fisherman and Simon the Fisherman had no right, after all, to look down upon Simon the Tanner. If John the Baptist was to prophesy, some one must clearly make him a leathern girdle. To Peter, the tannery was, however, only of interest because it furnished funds to sustain the ecclesiastical roof where the chief pastor of the Church could pray. Far removed from disturbing sights and sounds, Peter knelt motionless as the statue of a saint in its niche. Indeed, he was so still as he prayed that, to be perfectly frank, he fell fast asleep. This was between the hours of nine and twelve in the morning when the whole

world was at work. Even Saul of Tarsus was, at that moment, wearing out his fingers over canvas of goat's hair. But at Joppa the severance between commerce and Christianity had already commenced.

In Peter's attitude, there was much self-denial. For breakfast, he had eaten nothing—it may be that the food did not seem to him to be ceremonially clean—and he was suffering in his body from hunger. What Christ needed just then was not, however, a fasting apostle but a sagacious and sensible one. There were problems to be solved. The peril in Palestine was no longer the evil which the Church failed to cast out but the good which the Church failed to bring in. There was much to be said against troubling these peaceful congregations with the disputed presence of Cornelius. But it was unjust, none the less, that any congregation should secure its unity by excluding those who were entitled to approach the mercy seat.

To make contact between Peter and this truly excellent Cornelius needed two dreams, and once more we see at work the wireless of the soul. The two men were each alone, as they prayed,—Peter, like Ananias, because he wished to be alone, and Cornelius, like Saul, because no Christian received him. Cornelius was no more forgotten, however, than was the Ethiopian Eunuch. Of both these men it was true that, coming to Christ, rather than the Church, they were not cast out.

A messenger from God visited him, evidently, and, again following the practice of Jesus, addressed him by name, *Cornelius*. He might not be baptized. He might be shut out from the visible

Church. Peter might refuse to see him. But, none the less, he was registered in the Lamb's Book of Life. His prayers and gifts were to the Almighty as mnemonics. He need not go to Peter. Peter, if sent for, would have to come to him. He would have to go down from his roof, and pass through the tannery and surrender his ecclesiastical infallibility.

Peter's dream was so clear that afterwards he was able to turn it into history. For the first time in his life, he saw that all living things, however repugnant, are embraced in one divine purpose,—that nothing in this world can be ignored whether by faith or by science—since all are included as in a sheet of which the corners are gathered firmly by the grip of God's hand. Even the creeping thing that descends to earth from heaven—condescends, as it were, to dwell among men,—has its place in the scheme of happiness, and cannot be properly overlooked by the eye at a microscope, or by the philosopher at his desk. It is only the humble man who, when heaven is opened, sees as Stephen saw the Highest there enthroned. The proud man has first to see in heaven those unconsidered creatures whom in his heart he has despised

When Peter climbed to the roof, it did not occur to him that he would be called upon to rise still higher. The last need of which he was conscious was lack of dignity. Yet what God said to him was precisely what God had said not long before to Saul in his humiliation—*Rise!* Peter in prayer had to be as much lifted to his feet as the paralytic on his bed or the lame man at the Gate Beautiful. For the dignity that he lacked was the dignity o

the common round and the daily task. He could never be the man that he might be until he was ready with cheerful demeanour to kill and cook his own breakfast. Why should sinners do the rough work while saints do the praying? *Rise, Peter, kill and eat!* Be an ordinary mortal in ordinary affairs. Have done with asceticism of body as a cloak for superiority of spirit. Kill and eat—recognize that like other men you are dependent upon an ordinary diet—that, like other men, you are amenable to natural law—that there is no holier quality in your feet and hands than in theirs,—that, in Paul's words, you and they are linked by one fate with the body of this death. It is the declaration of a bond between Jew and Gentile, between Catholic and Protestant, between Black and White, between Serbian and Bulgarian, yes, between Frenchmen and Germans. It is the basis of modern biology—it anticipates evolution. It says for the Pagan what Shakespeare had to say for Shylock the Jew that, before all else, he is a man.

In the perversity of our race, there is a certain splendid if obdurate defiance of the Almighty. Not once but thrice did Peter answer back when God spoke. A curious suggestion of Our Lord's divinity may be found in the very courage with which this apostle, having often argued with Jesus on earth, dared also to argue with the Father Himself. It is the proud toss of the head with which the pallid yet unrepentant aristocrat steps to the guillotine. It is the cool piety with which the priest pours disdain on the dissenter. It is the curl of the lip with which the man who only attends opera watches the crowd which only enjoys the movie. *Not so, Lord;*

for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. The assumption is that common things must be unclean—the poem that is oft quoted must be hackneyed—the hymn that helps must be bad verse—the picture which draws and sells must be bad art—nothing can be the best if I have to share it with the million. In Peter's case, the privileges of wealth had been fully surrendered. No longer had he any holding in the boats on Galilee. But he clung the more tenaciously to the privileges of caste, to clique, to the few and the favoured, while God was loving the whole world.

Three times had he to be taught his lesson. All his life he had been a slow pupil. In Peter was revealed supremely the patience of Our Lord. At Gethsemane, he was warned three times of coming temptation. In the palace of the High Priest, he was offered three chances of confessing his Master. Three times was he told that his duty as Pastor was to feed Christ's Sheep. And three times here does he learn that nothing of Christ's is beneath respect. So has it been with every generation that has followed Peter. Not only in India and China and Japan are there religious and hereditary barriers to be broken down. There is no university—no system of schools—no navy—no army—no profession—no trade,—no social circle where you will not find the inner and the outer set, the upper and the lower strata, the included and the excluded. And while, like Peter, after centuries of experience, we still doubt in ourselves what is meant by our visions of democracy, behold—look—men are at the gate,—standing—knocking—asking to see us. We are uncertain

how to greet them. They have interrupted our devotions. They may be anarchists. They may be Bolshevists. They may be Radicals. Never mind—they are men—God has sent them; sent them not entirely because they have as yet the right Spirit within them, but because they know their need of something, not yet obtained. Go down to them, fearing nothing.

The motto, God first, may have suggested that Cornelius at Cæsarea ought to have gone himself to Peter at Joppa. Surely Peter's time was of more value than that of any Roman centurion. Was it seemly that an officer whose profession was war should thus summon an apostle of the Prince of Peace? The answer is that Cornelius was on duty and that all duty is sacred. The fact that he was responsible to pagan Rome did not make him less responsible to God. Neither for him nor for any one else is it necessary to suspend an obligation in order to reach the Redeemer. By staying at his post, Cornelius was able there to gather kinsmen and near neighbours for the welcome which was in so marked a contrast to the still hesitating account given by Peter of his readiness to enter such a company. It was as centurion that he could best recommend Christ, not to Peter's friends who were Jews, but to his own friends who never went to synagogues and places of worship.

The deputation, sent by Cornelius, consisted of two servants and a devout soldier who waited on him continually. We are told that no man is a hero to his own valet, but in this case the closest intimacy with the centurion engendered the deepest respect. It was the soldier who saw most of

Cornelius who was readiest to adopt his religion. Presumably, the servants were civilians, but of the soldier alone are we told that he was "devout," and this, I think, shatters the theory that no soldier can be a Christian. Peter's trouble over Cornelius was not that. If it had been, Cornelius could have retorted that men of prayer were just as much to blame for the death of the Saviour as were men of blood.

When the servants saw Peter, they met him as an equal. He became host and they were guests. All the evening they talked. There is a strange ring in their apology, as it were, for the existence of Cornelius,—their explanation that he was well spoken of *by the Jews*. We can follow the gradual persuasion of Peter's mind that after all he might perhaps venture to shake hands even with a Roman officer and gentleman. But he was still reluctant to act alone. Where it would have been so simple for him to go as invited and talk to Cornelius, he gathered the Church around him, chose a company of the faithful to walk with him, and, on reaching Cæsarea, saw nothing of the centurion until first he had consulted the disciples, there assembled. It was as if Christ's lambs could only be fed at a Guildhall Banquet.

So impressed was Cornelius with these preliminaries that when at last the Apostle approached him, he fell at his feet and Peter discovered that there is a possibility of sacerdotalism even in the primitive Church. Then, as always, the true heart of Peter leapt to a true decision. *Stand up!* said he, *I am myself a man.*

In that confession, Peter threw over the clerical

costume, the special intonation, the form and dignity of position which had kept him apart from wage-earners and the other professional classes. The moment that he came to them as a man—a man like themselves—he found it easy enough to tell them of Christ. His address was reverent, nothing in it was secular, but, on the other hand, nothing in it was ecclesiastical. There was not a hint in what he said of Jew and Gentile, of Apostle, Deacon and Disciple, of rich and poor; Peter appealed to "every nation"; God was "Lord of all"; Jesus healed "all who were oppressed"; preaching was to be to "the people"; and "whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." The interesting feature of this address is the fact that it is based not upon the recent vision of Peter but upon the prior teaching and example of Our Lord which Peter had forgotten. In the presence of Christ, our divisions simply disappear. We cannot think of Him truly without loving universally.

As that company listened, the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard. Without rite or ceremony, they had poured upon them what Peter himself found to be precisely the same Spirit Who had descended on the apostles. It was not by the hand of man that the Spirit came, but as a Gift direct from God. Baptism, which followed at Peter's suggestion, was a public symbol only of the accomplished fact.

That Judea should object to a blessing on the Gentiles is not perhaps wonderful. Judea had killed the Christ. But that the Apostles and Brethren in Judea should raise an outcry,—"they of the circumcision"—is perfectly amazing. Peter

was summoned before the Church and was put
trial. Point by point, he rehearsed his vision.
produced as witnesses for the defense the six
ciples who had accompanied him from Joppa.
was a note throughout, not of triumphant asser
of God's love, but of apology. God had given
Spirit to the Gentiles. What was Peter that
could withstand God? It was as if he had s
gested that a regrettable event had happened
that Another was to blame.

What a scene it was! An angry and resen
Church—an anxious and hesitating Apostle—
outside, the seething, dying, sinning human r
For the moment, under Peter's influence, they l
their peace. Some even glorified God that to
Gentiles also had been granted a change of min
more abundant life. But the battle was only p
poned. At Antioch, it was renewed. It sprea
Galatia. It wrecked Christ's cause within Juda
It is an eternal warning against limiting His Sa
tion to any class, to any race, to any creed, to
colour.

XVIII

THE OLD AND THE NEW CHURCH

BETWEEN Jerusalem and Antioch there was a distance of 400 miles by road and 2,000 years in time. Of the two cities, Jerusalem was, for the tourist and the pilgrim, by far the more fascinating, since there, as in some famous cathedral town, you could see noble edifices, and places of surpassing interest like the Temple, the empty Tomb, Calvary itself. You could even converse with apostles and, at the house of John, you would be served by the very Mother of Our Lord. In the calendar of the parent Church, one day had been stained blood-red by the death of Stephen and a second day was marked by the martyrdom of James. Thus early was the long tragedy beginning which for every succeeding century has been suffered by eastern disciples. It is a tragedy repeated from time to time in Korea and Madagascar and many other lands. The fortitude of the disciples in Judea has been an inspiration for all who came after. The little garrison was weakened in numbers, and in wealth, but it still held on. When James was slain, Peter did not flee, but went calmly to prison, and, as he expected, to death.

Yet Antioch—though of pagan origin and merely

political importance—was the place where men an women were first called Christians. The troub with Jerusalem was that before the disciples wer Christians, they felt that they had to be Jews. B tween sects and parties they drew elaborate di tinctions. They were like those to-day who ar deeply conscious that Catholics differ from Prote tants. Only to the Jews and Jewish proselytes di the Judean Evangelists preach. Their reveren for outworn things still somewhat obscured the sight of the living Saviour. It was a sincere reve ence yet it availed them nothing. The Judaize did not win the Jews. On the contrary, it was t please the Jews who were as hostile as ever th Herod killed James and in pleasing the Jews h succeeded. Later attempts were made to co ciliate the irreconcilable by persuading Paul t circumcise Timothy, and himself to enter int Mosaic vows, but these devices were equally futil The real danger was that the disciples of Jerusalen in their ardour for compromise, might set up th Judaism within themselves against the suprem authority of Christ. They did not see as yet th in Christ our traditions and our politics are forev absorbed. Antioch was otherwise instructe No one could have been a more obvious Hebre than Saul of Tarsus. In his first reported sermo at the other Antioch in Pisidia, he singles out h fellow-tribesman of Benjamin, Saul, the son Kish, the first King of Judah, for especial mentio Of that ancient and historic association he was ev proud. He refers to it in his letter to Philipp But he says there that what things were gain t him by birth and education, these he counted lo

for Christ. Though a Jew, he was ready to be a Christian without prefix. Save the word Christian, he discarded every label, and the friends of Antioch followed his lead.

Of the rise of the Church in Antioch, Jerusalem was as unconscious as the average chapel in Europe or America is unconscious of the rise of the church in Uganda. Stray missionaries from Judea arrived in what was the third city of the Roman Empire, but they were not apostles, and what first concerned Jerusalem was the disturbing rumour that people outside the Hebrew faith insisted on accepting Christ. As Peter had investigated the somewhat similar situation in Samaria, so Barnabas was sent to look into this second case of unauthorized revival. It seemed a long journey, far longer than Joppa, Cæsarea, or Galilee. *You must go,* they said, *as far as Antioch.* We do not know what were the views of Barnabas in theology. He is described simply as a good man. He was full, not of doctrines and prejudices, but of the Holy Spirit—of faith—faith in God and faith in his neighbours. By what he saw at Antioch, he was in no way disturbed. If Gentiles came to Christ, so much the better. Barnabas had been brought up in Cyprus and knew heathendom at close quarters. About ceremonial, he seems not to have worried at all. He said nothing about joining the Church. But he did say a good deal about cleaving with all the heart unto the Lord.

In leadership, the Church at Antioch was deficient. Apart from Barnabas, the only prophets and teachers were three—Simeon called Niger, who seems to have been a coloured man and is men-

tioned first, Lucius of Cyrene, who also came from Africa, and Manaen, called after one of the most degenerate Israelite kings, who had been himself reared in the corrupt court of Herod Antipas, adulterous husband of Herodias and murderer of John the Baptist. Under these circumstances, Barnabas needed a colleague, yet although he had come from Jerusalem, he did not send there for help. He looked in the opposite direction and remembered Saul, still living in Tarsus. He sent for Saul and Saul came.

Thus was the historic witness to Christ—the sight of the eye—reinforced by the witness of personal experience. Men who had never seen the Saviour could be best won by men who had seen Him only in faith. Saul came because by this time he was prepared in mind and soul. Having sat once at the feet of Gamaliel, and with disastrous results, he would never again entrust himself to an earthly teacher. Leaving Damascus, he had spent three years in Arabia, thinking things out alone, unaided by the fathers or by commentaries, and no mere listener to the sermons of others. Thus was he equipped to speak with authority and not as the scribes. In the kingdom of heaven, promotion is by merit only. As we pursue the narrative, we find that Barnabas and Saul gradually became Saul and Barnabas, while John Mark, for the moment, dropped out. John Mark had also come north from Jerusalem and his failing was due to the fact that he had lived too long in a Church that lacked the missionary zeal. His impulse was sound but weak. It carried him to Antioch and even to Cyprus, but not on to the more rugged Asia Minor. Barnabas

was prepared for Asia Minor, but what held him back was the claim of John Mark, who was his nephew. Saul became the Apostle of the Gentiles in preëminence, because Saul's itinerary was unconditional.

For a year or more, these men worked in Antioch and with notable results. Everywhere we find a constant desire to give. When Agabus, the prophet of Jerusalem, came, and instead of proclaiming Christ, the Bread of Life, announced a bad harvest for the whole world, the disciples of Antioch, equally threatened with others, thought only of sending relief to Judea. The relief was carried by Barnabas and Saul, but we do not read of any expression of gratitude. The tender thanks which Paul wrote to the Philippians and again to Philemon is on record in Jerusalem's case, and the two almoners returned to Antioch. It was not until a few years later that Jerusalem sent her answer. When it came, it created no little stir. Certain men from Judea arrived in Antioch and told the disciples there, who had subscribed the money, that they could not be saved unless they were circumcised. Seldom surely has a splendid generosity been rewarded by so harsh an excommunication. And it is interesting to compare this with the Parthian bolt which Peter levelled at Paul—as told to the Galatians—that he should *remember the poor*—a thing that Paul had been *forward to do!*

Jerusalem had her twelve apostles; Antioch only had her five prophets and teachers; yet, of these five, it was proposed to send two—and they were the ablest two—as foreign missionaries. In the Gospel itself, this Church was thus unselfish. Hav-

ing emptied its pockets of money, it emptied its pulpits of the most eloquent preachers and was content to find Christ in the second best. After the first missionary journey, Saul and Barnabas only returned to Antioch to tell their experiences and gather reinforcements for a second crusade. Without their help, the community continued its world-wide witness, and when Barnabas decided to settle in Cyprus, Antioch released Silas to fill the gap in the firing line.

What drew together the two bodies of disciples in Jerusalem and Antioch was the sense of a common sacrifice—a common suffering, which corrected divergences of temperament. While Saul and Barnabas were in Jerusalem, a terrible crime was committed. Over James and John, the sons of Zebedee, there hung a destiny, as dreadful as any ill doom of kings. They were to drink that cup to the dregs which the Crucified drained. They were to live for Him only to die with Him. And the first to fall was James. In Stephen's case, there was at least a scene and a trial. But James was cut down with a contemptuous cynicism—merely as an act of cool policy.

Then, to the dismay of the faithful, Peter was arrested and flung into prison. Over him as over the sons of Zebedee, there lay the certainty of violent death. The Master had foreseen it. Horror deepened when it was remembered that these were the days of unleavened bread, that Easter or Passover was pending and that apparently the awful fate of crucifixion, in mockery of Christ, awaited Christ's chief apostle. Four quarternions of soldiers guarded Peter and to two soldiers was he

bound by chains. It was the night before the fatal morning when he was to be brought before the mob, already accustomed to cry, Away with him!

In the glorious annals of discipleship, there is no picture more sublime in its sense of mastery over human frailty than this of Peter, the impulsive yet timid follower of the Lord at a distance, sleeping like a little child in the darkness and discomfort of that dungeon. Before applying the chains to his wrists, they had allowed him to remove his sandals and his cloak, and by thus ungirding himself, he had shown to all the world which was to hear of his escape, how slender was his hope of deliverance. Between him and safety lay three locked gates,—through the first ward and the second ward and so into the street, which last gate was of iron. The keepers of all those gates were on duty, as if to prove that the soul of man cannot be entombed, save by the vigilant determination of man himself. Yet as Peter, on the roof of the tannery, had escaped from his thrice-strong prejudices and walked forth to Cæsarea, a free man, so was he to escape from the thrice-strong walls of material environment.

In industry, in diplomacy, in war and even in games, we realize the value of coöperation. If men will only work together, no despotism, no injustice can endure. The disciples at Jerusalem met this crisis with precisely this coöperation in prayer. As the ark of the covenant was carried around the walls of Jericho so did these prayers arise, like a besieging bombardment, high above the unresponsive walls and gates of the Judean Bastille.

Few if any believed that the answer to prayer would be what it was. No one was more astounded than those who prayed the most earnestly, when Peter actually appeared, a free man. They were not thinking of his escape. They did not plan it. They wanted him to endure to the end.

Peter knew and loved the Psalms. *The angel of the Lord,* he had read, *encampeth around them that fear Him, and delivereth them.* In fear of the Lord, rather than of death, he rested confident. When he felt a blow on his side and saw a light in his cell, it seemed as if an angel had indeed come to him. The only question in his mind was whether the angel was a dream, or a waking reality. The visitant revealed at once an intensely practical mind. *Arise up,* he said, *quickly! Resume your cloak and sandals. And gather that garment about you as you follow me.* Peter obeyed—walked through those dim corridors after that flickering lamp—and still wondered whether he saw a vision. At the gate, the angel left him, alone in the silent street, a fugitive from injustice.

Whether that angel be of earth or heaven, makes little difference. Enough for us, that until his work is done, no servant of God can be bound by any chain or confined in any dungeon. The Christ in Peter could be no more entombed by man than the God in Christ.

There he stood by himself, utterly dispossessed of his leadership, yet never so noble a figure as when stripped of his status and dignity. Thus began what I may call the withdrawal of Peter—his retirement from the central position—his gradual journey to the circumference. What he

learnt when he left the limelight, we shall see when we open the immortal letters with which he enriched the Church.

Slowly he walked down that street, wondering where he should go. All his landmarks had disappeared, and he must have assumed that his friends would be in bed. Still he thought he would try the house where lived Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark. He loved that home, because he had been able there to talk freely about the life of Jesus upon earth,—so freely that John afterwards wrote the most vivid of all the four Gospels. He found the door shut.

But through the windows there shone unusual lights and Peter heard the murmur of uninterrupted prayer. At the risk of their lives they were praying for him. He knocked at the door and heard a footstep. A girl named Rhoda, or Rose, was on the watch for danger and she asked him, softly, who he was. She knew at once the tone of Peter's voice. No apostle ever received so undesigned a tribute of gratitude as Peter did, when that simple maidservant, for very gladness over his arrival, ran to the prayer meeting to tell her news, before first letting Peter enter. If the weakness of this man was his ecclesiasticism, his strength was his sympathy with the poor and unlearned. The great apostle and patriarch could win for Christ the heart and will of a damsel, whose only life was housework.

Rhoda was greeted with irritation and incredulity. To break up a prayer meeting, as she did, was hysterical and improper. To pray was right; to receive an answer to prayer was madness.

The disciples attached much more importance t what they said to God than to what God did t them. Rhoda's task of earning her livelihood pre vented her going to many prayer meetings and he creed was merely what she found of Christ and Hi Church in her daily occupation. Of that much sh was certain and she constantly affirmed it. Scholar and critics might say what they liked—they migh deny this or that authorship—they might challeng this or that date—but Rhoda still protested tha Peter stood at the gate and that she knew his voice

Then the spiritualists came forward with thei theory. Substituting theosophy for theology— that is the assumed wisdom which God has kept t Himself for the actual wisdom which He ha uttered—they declared that Peter had been turne into an angel. That God could do wonderfu things, they thus fully believed, only they though that the wonderful things must be distinct some how from human experience. Flesh might becom spirit but doors must remain locked.

The one plain fact was that Peter kept on knock ing. Every one in the house, whatever his theor of miracles, could hear those resounding blows They have not yet ceased. After the lapse of cen turies, Peter insists upon escaping from the priso of neglect and oblivion and making himself an God's goodness to him known among all men. O the one hand, his tale sounds ridiculous. On th other hand his knuckles are actual. You leav Peter outside in the dark, unseen, his cloak aroun him, but you do not get rid, either of him or of hi message.

He was no magician. Although he had escape

through three prison walls, past four quarternions of soldiers, from chains and a dungeon, he could not of himself open that one wicket gate, kept by a girl. Yet the longer he waited, the more overwhelming became the proof that he was there. Not the girl alone, but the entire company ultimately assembled to welcome him and express astonishment. He beckoned with the hand. Astonishment is not enough. Religion demands understanding as well as wonder. They should know that it was the Lord Who brought the Apostle out of the prison, and they should tell this to others—to James—to the brethren. No longer was it James, the son of Zebedee. He had died the death. We now read of James, who as brother of the Lord in the flesh, failed to believe on Him, but was convinced by His risen Spirit.

Peter then departed. His very message to James was an abdication. He settled in Cæsarea. He lived as neighbour to Cornelius. But he had to live in hiding. He was a hunted man. The soldiers who had let him slip lay slain. Herod was seeking for the refugee. With his mouth closed and his mission destroyed, Peter renewed that wonderful intimacy with the Redeemer which was to yield unto future generations his subsequent writings.

XIX

THE FIRST ORGANIZED MISSION

IN every community, whether it be Church or State, there come at rare intervals what Mr. Gladstone called the golden moments, when life runs rhythmic as a balanced wheel, revolving swiftly yet silently on its axis. To such a noble adjustment of their activities had the disciples at Antioch now arrived. Their lives each day were devoted to three associated objects—first, prayer or the yearning for best things; secondly, ministering or service, which means the doing of immediate things; and thirdly, fasting, which is the sacrifice of pleasant or desirable things. Put it another way—they cherished ideals; they accomplished work; and they made gifts. Yet they were still conscious of a divine discontent. In every true life there is always the something to be attained. Many Churches have proceeded to a more elaborate theology, a more ornate ritual, a more dignified fabric. Satisfied with the fullness of Christ, these saints of Antioch only aimed at sharing with others what they themselves now enjoyed. To speed the Gospel, not to explain or complicate it or reduce it to a code was their object.

The Holy Ghost inspired in their people a sense of proportion. They realized that their Church was only one part of a larger scheme, of which God reserved unto Himself the plan. In the hearts of

Barnabas and Saul, the claim of God was ringing loudly—not as a whisper or hint or idea but as a call. At first, the Church was loath to let them go. And as long as it was thought that the decision lay between the impulses of the two men and the wishes of their friends, no decision was taken. But the time came when everybody in the Assembly heard the Voice—clearly—as a challenge—*Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.* It meant that in the ultimate reckoning these disciples did not belong to the visible Church,—the ecclesiastical authority was not to be their final arbiter—no vow of obedience was to be taken save to the Almighty Himself. It was a pronouncement for all time that God is Supreme over the Church and over every member of the Church. His prerogative transcends the outlook of the Church. If God's will demands separation from the Church, then, in such separation or schism, there is no sin, or offense. That separation at Antioch includes all the Western Christianity that has arisen out of it—Methodism, the Baptists, the Quakers, the Evangelicals of every sect and communion. The future of the dissent inaugurated by Saul and Barnabas was entirely undefined. Beyond Seleucia, a few miles down the River Orontes, that future was all unknown. Yet on the heads of the dissenters or separatists the Church laid hands. No parochial system was applied to restrain their preaching. And one can only make the comment that if the Catholicism of Rome had treated Wycliffe and Luther and Calvin and Huss as the disciples treated Barnabas and Saul, if the Episcopacy of England had thus treated the

Wesleys and Fox, how different might have been the story of mankind during the last five centuries.

As David selected stones from the brook and fitted one in his sling and whirled that sling in circles about his head and then at the appointed time released the missile which sped straight to the mark, so did these disciples select their messengers to go forth alone, unto the regions beyond. The risks were obvious. There was no guarantee that the missionaries would preach the pure faith without wavering. All was entrusted to the Holy—or Right—Spirit which animated them. They were to accept the same responsibility for the honour of the disciples as any Christian merchant of Antioch who went down town to Seleucia to dispatch a cargo for Cyprus by that same ship on which Barnabas and Saul embarked.

Christ, as a wise strategist, had told His apostles that they must preach the Gospel first at Jerusalem, Samaria and in Galilee, before proceeding to distant lands. They were to begin with a familiar sphere of work. Saul, born and bred on the Mainland of Asia Minor, had already uttered his testimony in Tarsus. But Barnabas came from Cyprus, as did his sister's son, John Mark, and it was to Cyprus therefore that the little party first made their way. Yet neither here nor in Tarsus did the relatives of the missionary render any assistance. Barnabas had sold his estates and given away the money, but the neighbours were not impressed. Doubtless it was a good thing that no question of landlord and tenant was intruded upon the direct preaching of the Gospel. Barnabas was a suitable ambassador of Him, Who though He was rich, yet

for our sakes became poor. But in this island which was the very Klondyke of the Mediterranean—men knew that they could not be redeemed by corruptible things such as silver and gold. The economic solution was not enough to secure human happiness. Nor was domestic affection comparable with the love of God. The last to believe on Christ were His brethren in the flesh. The call of family which drew John Mark to Cyprus carried him not one yard beyond the companionship of family. He was ready to take holy orders, provided that he might settle down in the family living. But the wilds of Galatia—the grinding environment of the East End or an East Side Curacy—were too much for him, just then. He returned to Jerusalem.

In Cyprus and the other places visited by Paul, there were usually synagogues, where every week good and reverent people met regularly for worship. Not one verse of the Bible did they leave unread. Not one prophecy of the Messiah did they overlook. Nor had they then endorsed the rejection of the Son of Man by Jerusalem. On the contrary, they were prepared as a rule to hear of Him. In addressing the Jews of Pisidia, Paul did not bring those charges of personal responsibility which Peter and Stephen levelled at the Hebrews of Judea. To each province and city, Christ was freely offered, as an unspoilt and acceptable Redeemer, and each province, each city wrote on the pages of time its own verdict. If Iconium and the second Antioch and Derbe and Lystra are to-day scarcely known to fame, it is because they entombed, not the Body of Christ but His Spirit.

There was not, after all, such great difference between those ancient synagogues and our modern churches. The Jews of those days sincerely wanted a Messiah as we do, and believed He would come, but, for some deep human reason, these communities, when offered the Messiah Who did come, were tempted one after the other to refuse Him. They looked for a Son of David; they found a Son of Man; and, for a Son of Man they were unprepared. They declined a salvation in which they were partakers of all men's sins and sharers of all men's pardon. Yet no other Salvation than this was offered. In Christ, irrevocably, all the ancient monopolies of religion and wealth and art and society are destroyed and in exchange we are offered only Himself.

The synagogue was by no means a moribund institution. Slowly but surely, Judaism was advancing. Many a Gentile was admitted as proselyte to the household of Abraham. But the yoke under which the convert had to pass was ecclesiastical, not personal; social, not individual; a rite, not an experience; circumcision, not repentance; a surrender to the Church, not a surrender to the Lord. It was like the baptism enforced wholesale on the Moors in Spain,—a thing of the body, not a change of the heart. In Christ, the yoke of circumcision was abolished; the religious test was cancelled; any man could come to Him at any time and in any place and by any road. It was this glorious liberty of the children of God that aroused in the Jews such furious hatred.

If no conflict was provoked in Cyprus, it was because the Judaism that there met the missionaries

had been corrupted into the sorceries of a pervert. A Hebrew called Bar-Jesus—son or professor of salvation—had imposed his practices upon Sergius Paulus himself, the deputy of the island. In the influence of this scoundrel we can see how even a far-sighted Roman statesman knew that the political system of his Empire lacked the materials for happiness which were held somehow in the hands of the Israelites. Bar-Jesus had offered false doctrine, but the deputy, hearing of other Jews who preached, was anxious to receive a second and more hopeful message. Between Paul and Bar-Jesus there followed a deadly conflict for the soul of that Gentile official.

The false or unorthodox Jew was already an international figure. Bar-Jesus was quite willing to use a Gentile name like Elymas. He is the first of that Jewish class, never more powerful than to-day, which has forsworn Moses without receiving Christ. He is the original Bolshevist. Coining false money, preaching false economics, he works by subtlety. The typhus and famine that dog his footsteps show what mischief he perpetrates. As child of the devil, father of lies, he deceives those who trust him. He is enemy of the right. He is indeed leader of a crusade, but it is his own crusade, and between him and those who live and die with Jesus of Nazareth, there is nothing of any kind in common. He takes the way of the Lord, the upward progress of mankind—he takes that way and he perverts it. Hence the mist and darkness that fall on him—the inability to get anywhere—the need for outside help and guidance. It was not only the orthodoxy of Saul that went blind. The

unorthodoxy of Bar-Jesus was not less blind. Both Saul and Bar-Jesus had to be led like children by the hand. Indeed, it was the orthodox man who, of the two, first saw Christ, and walked with Him furthest.

At the second and smaller Antioch in Pisidia, the issue with historic Judaism was fairly joined. Between Christ and Moses, no Elymas the Sorcerer intervened. In Paul's sermon, we can detect at once the humility of his mind and the power of the Spirit. This greatest thinker of the early Church was ready at Antioch to repeat, point by point, the general argument of Stephen on the annals of the Jewish people, and of Peter, on the Resurrection. In temperament, no three men have ever been born more diverse than Peter, Paul and Stephen. But in their message no men could have been more united. The value of preaching is to be determined by what the man in the pew makes his own and tells to others. Here we see that those references to the Psalms which Peter introduced—those narratives of the wilderness and kingdom which Stephen recounted—were finding Saul of Tarsus, were gripping him, were conquering him.

In the Levant, Pisidia corresponded to the wild and remote west. The arrival of strangers was an event. Into the synagogue where Paul spoke, the Gentiles, uninvited, came. From beginning to end of his sermon, Paul did not address one single word directly to them. It was Christ for Israel, for the children of Abraham,—Christ, the sure mercies of David that he proclaimed. But when he had finished, a strange thing happened. The Jews, as was their custom, walked away. The Gentiles stayed

behind. The men nearest Christ were found to be, not the men of highest privilege but the men of deepest need.

What they proposed was, literally, a revolution. *Preach these words to us,* said these Gentiles, *break down privilege. Universalize the chance of happiness.* It was a new and challenging situation, and in meeting it, the Jews and proselytes were divided. You had progressives who were interested enough to join the Gentiles. You had reactionaries who went home. For the moment, however, the multitude was unanimous. The mob of Paris, storming Versailles and claiming the King, was not more dramatic to witness than this mob of Antioch, storming the synagogue and claiming the Christ. It was the first outbreak of irrepressible Lollardy, Methodism, Brotherhood.

That multitude, thronging the old and exclusive and respectable place of worship, was doubtless motley and unclean to look upon. The neglected masses of Antioch in Pisidia were a no more lovely sight than the neglected masses of a modern city and their presence in the Church outraged the proprieties of the regular pewholders. If the synagogue had been empty, it was because the worshippers, if their hearts were searched, did not want it to be thus crowded with the lame, the halt, and the blind. The terrible prejudice still cherished against the Jews is explained by their attitude at Antioch and other towns towards the Gentile democracy. If the Jew had said that he disbelieved his prophets, if he had repudiated his Bible and forsworn its promises, his case would have been less desperate. But, on that very Sabbath, he had

been reading the Law and the Prophets. With courageous tact, Paul had put his points in the very words of Scripture and had quoted the warning against those who despise God's work in their own day amongst their own fellow-men. In pleading for the Gentiles he based himself, not on the words of Jesus of Nazareth, which were recent, but on the words of Isaiah, which were already known to be eternal. The sin of Judaism was not that they rejected Christ only, but that in order to reject Him, in order to despise His humbler brethren, they were false to themselves. And, for this reason, history has not acquitted and cannot yet acquit this nation. The Jew, who, reading his Old Testament, still ignores the risen Christ, is in exactly the same position as the Christian who, reading both Testaments, sees not the further coming among men of Christ ascended. As the mediæval man hated the traditional Jew, who had stood between him and the Saviour, so will the modern man hate the traditional Christian, if he stands between him and the Christ of To-day. The hostility to many of our Churches is not different in essence from the hostility manifested by Paul and the people towards the synagogue when they cried—"We turn to the Gentiles!" It may be that from the pulpits to the forums, the brotherhoods, the labour unions, the rotary clubs, we shall see Christ's ambassadors turning, in this our day. When Paul wrote—*How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?*—He was writing not to Jews alone but to all men of all time.

The Jews had been able to kill Christ Incarnate. But against Christ risen, they could make no head-

way. Men filled with envy were outmatched at every point by men filled with Joy and the Holy Ghost. Driven from Antioch, the missionaries proceeded to Iconium. Driven from Iconium, they went to Derbe and Lystra. Like the flakes of a great rolling snowball, their pursuers grew in numbers. Good women, who believed that mere devotion means righteousness, were stirred up by the men and stirred up others. Never was there in that region such a hue and cry. But where the Christians won was in their perseverance. A lie cannot endure because it does not last as long as truth which is everlasting. And the malice that assailed the disciples came to nothing because, in malice, there is no quality of the Eternal. Paul and Barnabas fled for their lives. At Iconium, the stones actually stunned Paul and he was dragged out of the city unconscious. But these missionaries only sought refuge in distance, because they wished to return into the danger zone. On their way home again, they did not hurry through Iconium and Lystra and Pisidia. Calmly, they revisited the disciples, strengthened them with the example of their own fortitude and warned them that tribulation levels the road which leads to the Kingdom of God. Where preaching the Gospel had been the task, they now, having sown the seed, gathered the harvest. Each society of the faithful was organized under a committee of chosen elders. Each was commended, not to man, not to pulpits, patriarchs or prelates, but to God, in Whom, rather than in Paul and Barnabas, the latest disciples must put their trust.

XX

OLD CONFLICTS WITH NEW

THE best way to understand the strange old quarrel in the early Church between circumcision, as they called one party, and uncircumcision, is to read one's newspaper. There we find that in every community we come across two kinds of people—variously labelled as Conservatives and Liberals, Catholics and Protestants, Royalists and Rebels,—those who cling to the old and those who reach forth to grasp the new. The march of history is a parade in which the rank and file seldom keep step, and in every age, circumcision and uncircumcision, both claiming Christ yet each warring on the other, have threatened the unity of the Church. In Palestine, the Lord was risen indeed. His Spirit was shed abroad in men's hearts—yet at the Temple in Jerusalem and in every Jewish Synagogue, the ancient worship continued in the ancient way on the ancient Sabbath. Instead of opening a new week, a new era, these services were still held on Saturday, which closed the old week. They dwelt on the past rather than on the future. They appealed to older men like Peter but not to younger men like Timothy and Titus.

In those birth pangs of a modern faith, the Church was nearly rent asunder. Between Peter and

Paul, and even between Paul and Barnabas, there were sharp words. Here in this twentieth century, we can catch the echoes of that eternal controversy. Peter finds Christ at the altar, listens to Him in the Latin language, reads of Him in seven-point discourses and seventy-volume commentaries. Paul finds Him in the hut of the Y. M. C. A., under the flag of the Salvation Army, and between the pages of a pocket Testament.

There was no obvious reason why any quarrel at all should have arisen. Paul and Barnabas were living quietly at Antioch. All they said was that God had opened unto the Gentiles a door of faith. This meant that the children of men, so long and so sadly estranged from their Father, were coming home again and lifting the unfamiliar latch. Such being the position, nothing was required of Jerusalem except that Jerusalem should mind her own business. Unfortunately, as Paul told the Galatians, Jerusalem resembled Mount Sinai, a place of laws not love, rooted there in the deserts of Arabia, where the apostle had spent three years, without discovering in those thunders one spark of hope for us helpless and erring mortals. The idea of Jerusalem was that everybody should "conform." They wanted men and women to be Christians, but only under lock and key,—call it circumcision, baptism, confessional, what you will. *Unless ye be circumcised,* said they, *ye cannot be saved.*

Now Christ never said that. His word was not —*Ye must be born alike*—but *ye must be born again*—anew—afresh. If there are differences among people, born in the flesh, so there will be differences among people, born of the Spirit. The Gentiles ac-

cepted Christ as the fulfillment not of Moses only, but of Socrates, of Islam, of Buddha, of Confucius,—as one who turned bad Greeks and Hindus and Chinese and Americans and English, into good English and Americans and Chinese and Hindus and Greeks. Many of the Jews saw the Christ only as the Light of Judea—they had yet to see Him as the Light of the World. They knew and loved Him as the Christ of an ordered and upright middle class. They rejected Him as the Christ of the lumber camp and labour union and forum and brotherhood —I dare scarcely add, of the Soviet. Men and women, so they thought, must repeat the creed, attend the mass, sign the pledge, submit to authority, and so supplement or fortify Christ's salvation. In resisting the Judeans, Paul was fighting for personal liberty—for initiative—for individuality in education. He was asserting the rights of the soul against the power of the majority—of conscience against aggression—of small peoples against great empires,—of Democracy against Prussianism.

No nation has yet heard of Christ without refusing some part of His fullness. Not only at Calvary but all day long, are Christ and His love slain among men. Those very Jews, who wished to circumcise other disciples and so usurp Christ's mastership, were the men who in past years had helped to kill Him. Each country, therefore, which becomes Christian in name, and each generation should pray that other countries and succeeding generations may surpass its own vision of the Redeemer. It is not the key of Ceremonial that makes hard the gateway into life. If there be few that find it, the reason is that the gateway is narrow.

To enter, you must leave much behind. And especially the burdens.

It is true that on a famous occasion, the Lord granted unto Peter the power of the keys. But the very fact that Peter, of all men,—so wayward, so impulsive, so talkative,—was thus honoured, means that, given the conditions, the honour is universal. No one can truly worship Christ as Lord, which Peter did, save by the Spirit, and every Spiritual man becomes a king and a priest, who discerns the true destinies of mankind. But when Peter or when any one of us acts without the Spirit, we become, like Peter, comparable with Satan himself. It is an evil thing to deny, from whatever motives, as Peter denied, the need for Christ's atonement. It is an evil thing to limit Christ's love for all men. The struggle for a boundless gospel did not end with the crisis between Antioch and Jerusalem. It is inherent in our human nature. It broke out again in Galatia. We hear of it even in Philadelphia. There on the confines of heathendom were men who wanted to tell the good news throughout Asia Minor. But—fifty years after the Christ had suffered—the Jews forbade them and were denounced by the angel of the Church, in words that recall Our Lord's denunciation of Peter, as a synagogue of Satan. *What God shuts,* said the angel, *no one can open; and what God opens, no one can shut.* His prerogative is absolute.

The disturbers who came from Jerusalem doubtless considered that they were persons of importance but their names are not mentioned. When one thinks of what Christ has been to the world, these two thousand years, what hearts He has

healed, what pain He has soothed, what hopes He has inspired, one realizes how little those mattered who wanted to reduce His Cause to the narrow bounds of an obscure Jewish sect. They were critics only, who allowed themselves no time or strength to lay those foundation stones in the city of God on which are graven the names of builders. Probably their intervention delayed Paul's second missionary tour by many months. The Judaizers were wrong, but they had to be answered. The Church must learn wisdom, not by edict and law laid down, but by persuasion and ready consent. Even for mischief makers, there could be no compulsion, and the greater, therefore, was the responsibility of those who made the mischief. They could not waste their own lives without using up other lives, perhaps more valuable.

Hence the severity with which Paul blamed John Mark. It was from him that the disciples at Jerusalem had heard of the foreign mission in Cyprus and Pisidia. John was a fascinating man. As a good son, he lived with his mother, now getting on in years. A brilliant writer, he listened eagerly to every reminiscence of the Redeemer, of Whom he has left us perhaps the most vigorous of all the four biographies. But he was still an armchair Christian. He still selected his Church, where he liked the congregation. In Jerusalem and in Cyprus, he was happy because he was among friends. In Asia Minor, where the little isolated causes so nearly cost Paul his life, John Mark was miserable and discontented, not discerning the Lord's body. Hence, the difference between the testimony of John Mark to foreign missions and that glowing

report which Paul gave to the disciples, first at Antioch, then through Phœnicia and Samaria, and finally at Jerusalem. The facts were the same, but they were put in such diverse ways.

Jerusalem was aiming at the primacy, established later by Rome, and frankly this primacy was an encroachment. The assumption that geography and history make some men better than others always sets up *no small dissension and disputation.* But to refuse negotiation would have been to deny the unity of Christ. This quarrel was a family quarrel. To decline the issue would have turned evolution into revolution. It would have broken instead of liberating society. Where many a political reformer has lost patience and proceeded to extremes, Paul turned his footsteps backwards to Jerusalem, so interrupting his plans for evangelizing the world, yet winning by his meekness the greatest victory of all.

The Judaizers were formidable because they had a positive policy. They suggested for the disciples a definite and reasonable-sounding sacrifice. Since Christ had been crucified, who could object to mere circumcision? What grievance could there be in unleavened bread once a year? It was the perennial argument for ritual and monastic austerities, and Paul was too wise to be hostile. So far from abolishing circumcision, he circumcised Timothy. He thought it an advantage every way that a Christian should be born and bred in the old faith and acquainted as Timothy was with the Bible, or the oracles of God. At Jerusalem, Paul kept the feast. At Cenchrea, he shaved his head because he had a vow. The kind of anticlericalism which we find,

let us say, in parts of Europe, received no sanction from Paul. But where the Judaizers concentrated their minds upon themselves,—their feelings, their status, their ultimate safety,—Paul laid before them a map of the world and declared, place by place, what God was doing among all men. Instead of asceticism and formality, he proposed a conquest of evil and death and pain, a deliverance of nations and souls, bolder by far than any dream of empire or ambition of monarch. By that journey to Jerusalem, Paul brought the earliest Christians into touch with the latest Christianity. Amid persecution, there spread an atmosphere of victory. Over the entire region there swept a wave of joy that dispelled the gloom that in subsequent years settled on the eastern Churches, and is reflected in those mosaics which always present us with a suffering rather than with a triumphant Saviour.

While accepting circumcision or organized religion, Paul thus showed that organized religion must never be exclusive. Circumcision must be willing to appear on the same platform, occupy the same pulpit, eat the same bread as the uncircumcised. Since Old and New are surrounded by the eternal, they must live side by side. Therefore, while himself a Pharisee, Paul, in one of his letters, greets Titus, a Greek who was not circumcised, as a man of "a common faith." While the Colossians were troubled over rites and ceremonies, other than circumcision, Paul would have no one judge another whether in meat or in drink or in respect of an holy day or of the Sabbath days, since these are shadows, whereas the substance is Christ.

At Jerusalem, there was already an imposing

hierarchy. Ranged in their ranks sat apostles and elders and brethren—the Sanhedrin of the Primitive Church. Peter, though a witness, no longer presided and the moderator was James, brother of the Lord, who had been so slow to believe on Him. James was a man of judicial temperament, who had felt that enthusiasm for Christ was a form of madness,—who, as we learn from an Epistle to the Corinthians, only believed because he saw Christ Risen. Now called an apostle, that vision had been his only ordination and as he weighed the present issue before the Church, he displayed once more the caution of a statesman. It had its value. It secured for Paul and Barnabas an honourable acquittal. Judaism was not allowed to split the community. But that Sanhedrin extended no mandate—evoked no impulse for the Gospel. No one urged the missionaries to go yet further afield. No one offered to accompany them. It was only after he had breathed the air of Antioch that Silas volunteered.

Peter spoke and, as usual, spoke first. He spoke on the right side. And there is a certain human quality in his claim that through him first did the Gentiles hear the Gospel. Historically it was hardly true. The difficulty had been that the Gentiles, having heard the Gospel from others than Peter, could not obtain Peter's consent to admission as converts. The company seems to have been not wholly convinced by Peter's eloquence. His words became warmer. He spoke of tempting God, of putting a yoke on the necks of the disciples, and by a noble declaration of man's world-wide right to salvation and the Spirit, he finally secured silence

for Paul and Barnabas. Their overpowering influence was due to the fact that they had *hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.* That was an argument, impossible to refute.

It was not from James and this Christian Sanhedrin that the world was to receive, for all time, a final declaration of the free grace which is offered in the Lord Jesus. These men were thinking too much about their own dissensions to inscribe on an immortal page a letter like those to the Galatians, the Romans, and the Hebrews. Their decision was right; they threw over the Judaizers; but they expressed their decision in terms of a compromise, worthy of the Elizabethan or the Lutheran divines. The issue was circumcision; the keeping of feasts; the law of Moses. No one had suggested, up to that moment, that meats offered to idols were in question, or fornication, or the best way of killing animals for food. By introducing these matters, the Church saved the face of the men who had been in the wrong and, as we shall see, the faces, so saved, returned unabashed to create further trouble in the Church. As Paul was to discover, the problem of food served to idols was much more delicate than this casual mention of it would suggest. A chicken that has had its neck wrung is " strangled," yet eating cold chicken is not now mentioned as a sin. If only the Church had gone quietly about its appointed task, and had been spared the words which subvert the soul, all these questions would have solved themselves.

At Antioch, the letter from Jerusalem gave consolation. Peter also arrived there and ate freely with the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas began to

discuss their next tour among the heathen. But the Judaizers, having evaded a frank decision between Christ and Moses, returned to Antioch, and quietly refrained from association with Gentiles. They said nothing; outwardly they had become models of charity. But, beneath the surface, there was a quiet contempt for these nonconformists and you had, as it were, to choose between the exclusive and desirable clique, and the whole Society of the faithful. Peter and even Barnabas began to decline invitations which previously they had accepted. A taint of snobbery could be detected. People met in church, but not in each other's houses. Either you were in the set or you were an outsider.

At such behaviour by Peter, Paul did not hide his indignation. Writing of the matter years later, he tells us, without apology, that he withstood the apostle to the face, because he was to be blamed. By accepting the Christ, these Gentiles were cut off in some measure from their own people; they had become "peculiar" or "separate"; and to deny them their full inheritance in the Church was an injustice, against which Paul's spirit revolted. Unfortunately, Barnabas also, moved by old friendship with Peter, took sides against Paul, and with Barnabas was John Mark. In Christ, Paul won the day, but the wounds, inflicted on both sides, did not quickly heal. With a touch of irony Paul tells the Galatians. how Peter agreed that he might go to the heathen, provided that they remembered the poor, which—as he adds—"I also was forward to do." And when Barnabas proposed that John Mark should again accompany them to Asia Minor, Paul firmly drew the line. Barnabas pleaded that John

Mark was his nephew. Paul, who also had a nephew in Jerusalem but did not push his career, answered that Jesus Christ is Lord. Once for all, family influence, which helped Jesus so little, was condemned for His disciples. Barnabas took John Mark to Cyprus, and so ended his career at Paphos, while Paul was carried to Rome. Cyprus was an island in the Mediterranean, small, interesting, isolated. Rome surrounded the Mediterranean, and symbolized the world-wide Christendom that was to be.

The strife between the new and the old goes on forever. It was an issue that neither Peter nor Paul could settle. The wonderful thing is that while the quarrel itself continues, these men, who had been protagonists, were reconciled. Peter's last word about Paul showed that he read and liked even where he did not always understand what Paul wrote. He accepted Paul as a mouthpiece of the faith. And Paul, on his side, exchanged ideas with Peter so that in reading the letters of these two men, we are conscious of one Spirit, animating them both. Take any reference Bible and you will find a dozen illustrations of this loving counsel. And among the intermediaries was John Mark himself. He who had flinched from the perils of Asia Minor, followed Paul to Rome, and was there partner with Paul in his final witness. I sometimes wonder what event it was that led John Mark to close his Gospel so suddenly—as Luke closed the Acts.

XXI

THE CALL OF MACEDONIA

THESE are days when countless millions of men and women have no fixed abode. They are born in one country, migrate to another and settle finally in a third. It may be duty that carries them to and fro; it may be ambition; it may be mere restlessness; anyhow, their only hearth is a hotel, the cabin of a ship, an upper or lower berth in a sleeper. For such people, the wanderings of Paul are of absorbing interest because they show us, in a rapidly developing civilization, how to be happy though homeless.

Other travellers made during their lifetime greater stir. Alexander the Great, for instance, who wept at the Indus, because there was no other world to conquer, and Christopher Columbus, who discovered America. The especial quality which distinguishes Paul's journeys was that he went forth, not to get anything for himself, whether knowledge, or fame, or power, or wealth, but to give to others, to share with others, to hide himself and his aims in Christ which meant in the needs and hopes of others. For the sake of one Esquimau, Paul would have endured an Arctic winter, but in the mere discovery of the North and South Pole, he would not have displayed much personal

interest. Great as is the glory of flying the Atlantic, it was not the kind of glory that Paul wanted. To excite men's admiration, to furnish a new and thrilling sensation, to fill the newspapers, was nothing to a man, himself filled with the power of God unto salvation. Therefore, in one sense, his life was spent in vain, but by thus losing his life, he found it. This solitary pilgrim and stranger, as he described himself, who entered Athens, alone and on foot, who faced a violent death at Rome, with only Luke at his side, who kept no diary, and scattered his few writings to places so widely apart that subsequent collection could not have been foreseen, stands second to Christ alone in the splendour of his biography—the amplitude of his recorded utterances.

When Our Lord stated that the Son of Man had no place to lay His head, He showed how conscious He was that living in hotels and temporary apartments is abnormal. The very foxes have holes; the birds of the air have nests. Paul made friends in one place, only to tear himself from them. Repeatedly, as he was settling down, the call came to move elsewhere. Little need we wonder if he yearned for an abiding city, the place prepared for him, where he might be seated happily, with the Saviour Whom he loved. Yet as a figure in history,—hunted, persecuted, maltreated,—he was an utter contrast to the wandering Jew of poetry and drama. Shylock, dreaming of his ducats, is pitifully a smaller man than Paul, who being of the same race as Shylock, of the same education, the same tenacious obduracy, dreamed of an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth

not away, reserved in heaven—note the exquisitely unselfish touch—not "for me" but "for you"—for others than himself.

What made this difference between Paul and Shylock was the consciously realized companionship of Christ. As the tabernacle in the wilderness was guided by the pillar of cloud and of fire,—a narrative to which Paul would often refer—so his itinerary can only be explained by his prudent resolution only to travel where the presence of Our Lord led him. In his second missionary tour it is astonishing to note how his path was directed, neither to the left hand into Asia, the little province on the Ægean, nor to the right hand, to Bithynia, on the Black Sea, but straight between the two, to Troas, or Troy, for they were near one another, on the Dardanelles,—the gateway to Europe. At a later period Paul did make a church in Asia, like the famous Ephesus, his headquarters, but we can see the wisdom which secured for him the wider experience of Athens, and Philippi and Corinth and Salonica and Berea. It meant that he did not deal with the orientalized colonies of Greece until first he had seen Greek culture at the fountainhead. Thus sensitive was Paul to guidance, as a compass is sensitive to the earth's magnetic axis, and, with scientific exactitude, he resolutely declined to allow any one save the unseen Spirit to direct his footsteps. On his third return to Palestine, every one told him and with good reason that he was imperilling his life. In Asia and in Greece, the Jews had constantly pursued him, stirring up riots and fomenting plots, and the source of all this murderous intent was Jerusalem. Agabus the prophet, for

instance, had lived for many years in that city where he was usually the reluctant harbinger of trouble. We have seen how at Antioch, this man foretold famine, and at Cæsarea in the house of Philip, he warned Paul that he would be taken alive and bound. That no element of horror might be missing, Agabus unwound Paul's own girdle and tied the apostle's hands. The weeping of the disciples might break Paul's heart but not his will, and the situation is parallel with that great scene when Peter failed to dissuade Paul's Master from His purpose to meet a more fearful death on Mount Moriah than that which Abraham prepared for Isaac.

One of the surprises of the war has been the anxiety of our young men to undertake the most dangerous service as aviators. The peculiar feature of early Christian discipleship was that this courage, associated usually with the ardour of youth, began to be developed, as years passed, in men of advanced years. What would have been the nervous timidity of Peter's old age was changed into a passion to be partaker in those very sufferings of Christ at which Peter, when in the prime of life, had winced. In Paul's case, too, the trial most keenly felt was not danger but frequently ignominious yet imperative flights from danger. When the time came for standing forth boldly, to meet the foe at any cost, Paul wrote like a Commander-in-Chief announcing a glorious victory. In that common note of courage, we detect his final and complete reconciliation with Peter. In thought and theology they had argued, in death they were one.

As a Pharisee and a Jew, the peril of Paul's mind had been monomania, intensity,—this one thing he did and only this one thing. In Christ, Paul acquired a breadth of outlook, a balance of energy,—which transformed him from the narrowest minded of zealots into a statesman, unquestionably the greatest in Christendom. He was a revivalist but he was also an ecclesiastic. He won converts, but he also feared lest they should slip away, and his labour on them be in vain. Where others have been satisfied with bringing folks to the penitent form, Paul gathered the disciples into organized churches, to which he would return again and again, making sure of the foundations. Like the Sower, he went forth to sow, but his aim, as he told the Corinthians, was to be a complete husbandman—reaping as well as sowing, whatever increase was given by the Almighty. Changing the metaphor, he called himself a builder, careful in the choice of materials, not content with wood, hay stubble, but selecting gold, silver and precious stones, the most valuable to be found, and only valuable because fireproof. Hence the care with which, on his first tour, he retraced his steps, going back more than once over the same ground. On his second tour, he would not proceed further afield until he had again confirmed these Churches, making sure, as it were, of his communications. At Philippi Paul made a considerable stay, and at Corinth he worked for a year and a half. For three years, Ephesus was his headquarters and at least that period, probably more, was spent, first and last, in Rome. In Paul's evangelical fervour, therefore, there was neither haste nor intellectual

dishonesty. He wanted men to be saved from the wrath to come. But he also wanted them to understand the Book of Leviticus. He wanted the soul to be at ease, but he also wanted troops of good thoughts to garrison the mind. He was not a college don who keeps the Gospel, if he has it, to himself. Neither was he the kind of street preacher who serves the Lord his God with his emotions, but with nothing else.

This was the man who found himself at Troas, in doubt as to his future,—who remembered how he had been delayed by illness among the Galatians,—how he had been told by the Spirit not to go into Asia,—how he had tried to proceed to Bithynia, but had been again prevented. Never yet had Paul reached the ocean without crossing it, but here he hesitated. What wilfulness in the man there had been during past years, was now dead. One feels that Paul would have waited at Troas for the rest of his life, had no orders to the contrary arrived. But like an eagle, poised in the heavens, when all was dark, *he saw*—when all were asleep, *he dreamed.*

There lay Macedonia, rich, educated, historic, religious, the gateway to Europe, to the games, the pleasures, the fashions of Corinth, to the arts and philosophy of Athens, to the commerce and stern justice of Philippi, to the turbulent populace of Salonica. What manner of appeal would Jesus of Nazareth make to this elaborate and modern civilization? Over the glittering landscape, of which as yet he knew so little, Paul brooded and in the agony of his thought, his slumber was troubled.

The prophet Ezekiel had seen the pageant of our industries, and especially the wonder of our aeroplanes as a glory of wheels, flying through space, and amid the wheels the countenance of man. Throughout the material, so he declared, reigns the spirit of man and whithersoever the spirit was to go, there must the machinery direct its unbending course. To Paul, likewise, the glory and the power of Macedonia rose in person like a man; in all that resplendent vista, man alone mattered; and the manhood of Macedonia, so proud at midday, so busy, so vicious, so successful, stood in the silence of the night, a tragic failure, in all that makes life worth the living. With gods innumerable at Athens, with crime securely imprisoned at Philippi, with races and dramas at Corinth,—"*Come over into Macedonia and help us*,"—was the cry that awakened Paul, on his bed. From rich as well as poor, it came; from old as well as young; from men as well as women; as he told the Romans, there was no difference—all were one in the need of help. All turned by instinct to the man who, as the Christ bearer, could bring them help. The yearning of Lydia for some glory more enduring than her purple,—the misery of the demoniac girl, as she earned her master's livelihood,—the brutality of the jailer as he steeled his heart against his scourged and stricken prisoners—the dissatisfaction of Dionysius and Damaris, as they failed to find comfort in Athenian philosophy—all these cried out for a more abundant life. To Paul, the people seemed immeasurably distant from God—utterly dark amid the light that had not ceased to shine around him—irretrievably dead in trespasses and sins. But he

did not hesitate. Poised for flight, the eagle now swooped, as it were, from heaven to earth. Next morning, Paul found a ship, loosed his moorings to Asia, sailed straight to Samothrace, paused not an hour on that island, but proceeded to Neapolis, there landed, and marched upon Philippi. It was the chief city of Macedonia, the nerve centre of all that region; it was also a Roman colony, a reproduction of the world's mistress, seated securely on her seven hills. There, in Philippi, was fought the first decisive battle between Christ and the paganism of the civilization in which we ourselves live and move and have our being.

XXII

RESCUE OF WOMANHOOD

THESE are the days when every human institution—thrones, churches, empires, parliaments—are on trial. Even Old Rome which was, perhaps, the noblest organization that man has ever built, as modern states are built, upon a basis of paganism, failed under the test. The city of Philippi as a colony of Rome was all that a statesman admires. It was secure against foreign aggression. Its commerce enjoyed absolutely the freedom of the seas. A well-filled prison vindicated law and order. No authority interfered with the great business of making money, whether by dyeing purple as Lydia did, or by exploiting some degraded woman who wore the purple. All religions were tolerated. You could worship, as you liked, in a heathen temple or synagogue or place of prayer or Lydia's Christian drawing-room. Since religion of every kind was a mere spectator of life—the chorus to the drama—no one worried about what anybody else called himself. It was only when religion began wrestling with the realities that disturbances arose.

When he arrived in Philippi, Paul had no idea of attacking social abuses. Like many good pastors

to-day, he was bent upon spiritual work only. He found his way to the river, where people already worshipped God, and there he sought the deepening of their divine life. Avoiding secular subjects, he gathered men and women as living stones and built them, one by one, into a new community of saints. As he spoke, Lydia's heart opened, noiseless as a flower, and being a woman of means, she offered hospitality to the apostles, in her own private house. By thus limiting himself to this quiet and unobtrusive evangelism, Paul avoided contact with the municipality and the multitude. He took no part in local and national politics.

From Lydia's house to the place of prayer by the river, there lay the pavement or sidewalk. In Philippi, as in other large cities, this street was crowded with poverty, abundance, intemperance and even prostitution. Most of the people who met Paul ignored him or smiled indulgently at his mission, but there was one girl who knew better and she was a demoniac. Sheer devilry has always been quick to recognize the Son of God. It is not the drunkard, the gambler, the vicious man who raises difficulties about the divinity of Christ. He believes and he trembles. He believes because he has tried the alternative. This damsel did not deny the Gospel. On the contrary, she asserted it. She shouted that Paul was *a servant of the Most High God.* She laughed not because salvation was false, but because salvation was true. And, in her very laugh, there was a lesson. She did right, in her mania, to insist that the way of this salvation should be shown, not only to good folks like Lydia, but to the disreputable. The point of her taunt

was that the Gospel was offered—as she put it—*to us*—to her and her companions. She believed yet she defied.

The masters of the girl were men who used the profits which they made by her degradation, to buy the clothes and the jewels that adorned their wives and daughters. For the girl in the parlour, they sacrificed the girl on the pavement and apparently they rather applauded her blasphemous ribaldry. They put clever yet salacious jests into her young mouth. It was their libretto that she sang. It was their plot that she played. And even Paul did not at once get his moral bearings. He lived at a time when such slavery was permitted and since the law of property was against the girl, he was reluctant to interfere.

But while the Church went her way in dignified silence, the woman continued her cry. She was not answered by saying that as a sweated worker she must be subject to the laws of supply and demand. Tom Hood took her side and wrote *The Song of a Shirt*. They who argued that her bondage was ordained of Moses were confounded by Harriett Beecher Stowe and Whittier. Others who thought that her circumstances were hardly proper to discuss had to confront Josephine Butler. It was hard indeed to meet Lydia every day, and receive her service, having passed by without helping Lydia's unfortunate sister. Paul could stand it no longer. He commanded the devil to come out of the girl. He rescued the unhappy creature. He struck the first blow of the Church for the emancipation of woman. He founded the modern suffrage.

Paul lived a bachelor and but for the grace of

God might have been a misogynist. Yet he has become the patron saint of Protestantism, while Peter, the married apostle, has been claimed, somewhat recklessly, as the ideal patriarch or pope of a celibate clergy. This is the more remarkable because, undoubtedly, Paul found it hard to get out of his books and into the mind of the child. Where the teaching of Jesus abounded in tender allusions to home, Paul drew his parables from the prize-ring, the race-course, the diplomatic service, the architecture of temples and palaces, the armoury of a Roman legion, or the science of anatomy, as discussed by his friend and physician, Luke. But the common idea that he held women at a discount is mistaken. He and Silas looked upon the deliverance of this Philippian girl as a work for Christ. For her sake, they were stripped of their raiment and scourged; for her sake, they were thrust bleeding into a foul dungeon, where through the dark night they sang praises.

What Paul desired of women was a full measure of noble conduct. At Cæsarea, he selected for his host that Philip whose four daughters prophesied. In the city of Corinth, he approved of a woman praying and preaching in public, but in a modest costume, suitable for her sex. He insisted upon the single marriage vow and dealt with the subject, gravely, and with good sense. He pointed out,—what is obvious—that the cares of marriage often limit a man's public career. He warned his friends that many marriages are unhappy. He stated frankly, what has never ceased to be the fact, that a wife often seeks to please rather than to rule her husband. But he dignified that relation

by declaring it a mystery, a symbol, expressive of Christ's love for His Church. A man shall cherish his wife as he cherishes his own flesh, and so far from forbidding matrimony, Paul expressly told the younger women to marry and bear children.

His messages to women who had become disciples were numerous. It was to his mother, Eunice and his grandmother, Lois, that he attributed the whole of Timothy's superb training in the Scriptures. Again, there was Phebe who went down from Cenchrea to help the Christians in Rome; and Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, who were expelled as Jews from Rome to Corinth, where the Church met in their house—a husband and wife who are never mentioned except together. These are only a few of the many women, immortalized by Paul's allusions, and if at times he wrote severely about feminine frailties, it was because he knew what harm women can do. It was their influence that wrecked his mission at Iconium. At Corinth, they were bidden to cease their gossip during the services, and to discuss with their husbands afterwards whatever points in the sermon they failed to understand. But if, in one passage, he calls them busybodies, in another passage he brings precisely the same charge against men who are idle in their habits.

Where Perseus fought the dragon to save Andromeda and where knights of chivalry entered the tournament to honour their lady of high birth, Paul and Silas were not ashamed to suffer ignominy, only less shameful than a felon's death, for a girl whom mythology and chivalry would have despised. As gentlemen and as Christians they had their reward.

Leaving Philippi, scarred and bruised, they went to Salonica and to Berea where many honourable women were won for Christ. This influence never diminished and when Paul made his defense before Agrippa, it is significant that Berenice, the Queen, attended the trial. From that day at Philippi to this our own day, the cause of Christ has been linked indissolubly with the dignity, the grace, the rights of woman, and particularly of woman as the queen and the glory of the home. To whatever region of the world you travel, whether in the lands of Islam, of Buddha or of Confucius, you will find this to be broadly true and one of the first sure results of a collapse of the faith, even as nominally professed in countries like Germany and Russia, is a renewed degradation of woman.

It was for no narrow and dialectical formulary that Paul and Silas were thrust into that prison. The issue was simple and direct. The multitude were asked to decide between those who thought that gain was more important than the girl and those who thought that the girl was more important than gain—between Barabbas, who robs people of life and goodness and Christ who gives them life and goodness—between Mammon, which means the material, and God, Who is spirit and truth. The accusation was public. The trial was by jury of the entire multitude. The verdict was unanimous and popular. Gain was preferred to the girl—Barabbas was preferred to Christ—Mammon was preferred to God, and this happened in a city wherein were combined all the advantages of Roman Law and Greek Culture which, largely to the exclusion of Christ's teaching, have been for

centuries the foundations of our instruction in schools and colleges, especially in the old world. As we have sown, so we have reaped.

Doubtless it was not a straight choice that they put before the people. The decision between greed and girlhood was falsely expressed as a decision between Rome and Jerusalem, between the customs of idolatry and the laws of Moses. In the sense that they meant, this was a lie and it is but one more instance of the view, so often put forward in the Bible, that evil is essentially a deception, that Satan is the personified opposite to truth, and that preaching the Gospel is in the main a clearance of side issues. But, here at Philippi, as at the trial of Jesus, what they said in deliberate error was actually an undesigned statement of the facts. It was from Jerusalem that men learnt the nobility of woman. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were for us the founders of that romance which surrounded the lives of Ruth and Hannah and culminated finally in the incomparable loveliness of the Virgin Mother of Our Lord. To this day, the best Judaism shares with the best Christianity this glorious tradition, and if the new Israel could have been united with the old Israel to maintain it, how greatly would our happiness have been fostered.

XXIII

PRISONERS AND CAPTIVES

ON more than one occasion, Christ commanded His followers to visit prisons and comfort captives. In the annals of the early Church, I cannot find one record that the disciples, of their free will, obeyed this injunction. When Peter went to prison and when Paul and Silas went there, they were compelled so to do, not by love, but by law and by violence. Seventeen hundred years later, John Howard found the prisons of Christendom still unreformed. When he died of jail fever, Elizabeth Fry arose to declare the horrors of Newgate, and Gladstone aroused Europe against the dungeons of Naples. In many lands, even today,—in India, in Korea, in Germany,—criminal jurisprudence is challenged, abuses are alleged, and ameliorations are suggested, while in the United States, sentences are often reduced. The drama in the prison of Philippi is thus universal.

Peter had been consigned to the dungeons of an autocrat. He was a victim of Czardom, of the royal Herods. Paul and Silas were incarcerated, not less cruelly, by the multitude, by a plebiscite, a democracy—by an outbreak of sheer Bolshevism, superseding Paul's constitutional citizenship. Between the conduct of mankind in the mass and man-

kind on the throne there was thus, apart from the restraining love of Christ, but little difference. Men dwelling under any political system equally needed the Gospel. It was thus in Paris herself. The fall of an Empty Bastille was rapidly followed by the espionage and arrests under Robespierre and Napoleon. And never had the Bastille of the Bourbons been so dreaded as the Conciergerie under the Terror.

The flogging of Paul at Philippi was an example of lynch law. As a Roman citizen, he was immune and in insisting on immunity, he was right. Revolution tears down privileges, because privileges are usually enjoyed by the few. Moved by the deeper wisdom of Jesus, Son of David, Paul stoutly upheld his privileges, whether Jewish or Roman—upheld them because only thus could he share them with mankind. Instead of denying his ancestry, he said that whatever he was as a child of Abraham, we may become. Instead of renouncing his Roman citizenship, he used it to fortify the citizenship that is in heaven—the right of every man to happiness. It was at Philippi that there was first asserted the Habeas Corpus Act. It was Paul who forced the magistrates to fulfill their responsibility as the trustees for his inviolable body.

The weakness of any prison system is that, in the endeavour to restrict evil, it brutalizes what is good. Those prisoners could enjoy music, but until Paul and Silas sang, there was no music for them to enjoy. They understood prayer, but until Paul and Silas prayed, they were offered no evening worship. The first prison chapel was the innermost dungeon and the chaplains thereof were the

latest convicts. These jailbirds could have worked and read but their feet were fast bound in the stocks and their cells were dark. Instead of fighting the evil in these men with good, their keepers reduced the good to atrophy and left evil in command. It never occurred to the governor that an earthquake might shake his prison. His senses also had been dulled by routine and after scourging the missionaries until their flesh was raw, the man never slept more soundly. Yet, little as the authorities imagined it, Christ Himself was entombed in that penitentiary. He had to break forth. The foundations were shaken.

Those foundations were, in one word, fear. Society was simply afraid of the criminal classes. The governor was a hostage whose life was held in fear lest the criminal classes should escape. The criminal classes, on their side, were terrified by the scourge. There was no evidence that offenders inside the prison had done more wrong than the masters of the demoniac girl, who were respectable members of the community. Christ never referred to prisoners and captives as especially sinful but only as especially unfortunate. He came not to punish, but to save the lost,—not to inflict suffering on the guilty, but to share it—and what He said to the thief was—*To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* If the law had reprieved that thief, he would have been sent to penal servitude—as we say ironically—*for life.* Christ gave him His presence as the one sufficient indispensable condition of happiness. It is the offer and the acceptance of Christ that cure crime; and nothing else.

That earthquake brought revolution. Every

door was opened. Complete freedom of opportunity was established. All bands were unloosed. Not one prisoner could complain any longer of oppression. For a brief moment, you had there at Philippi those ideal circumstances of which Russian nihilists have dreamed—the absolute suspension of organized force—an unrestricted liberty for individuals. The millennium itself has offered no more noble prospect. Yet not one prisoner escaped. Some were innocent, others were guilty, but every one of them was fast bound by some chain that still clanked when the fetters of iron were shattered. No one joined Paul and Silas in their song. No one was able, there and then, to begin the reconstruction of society. The revolution was an entire success, for five minutes. In a quarter of an hour, every essential of the old régime had been reëstablished and by the consent of the prisoners themselves. Because it was the Christ Who alone sets free, therefore, they were as yet unprepared for liberty.

The earthquake had been material. It was like the bursting of bombs, the screech of shells, the rending of roofs and shattering of timbers. This was much, but it was not enough. The mind and thought of man had to change. On balance, it had been the jailer who wronged the prisoners, but the test for all, whatever their grievances, was their attitude for the future towards Christ. A humbled despot might be nearer to Him than the most abused of his unrepentent victims. For the first time in his life, the jailer encountered the large-heartedness, the magnanimity of the Redeemer—that splendid manliness which enabled Christ to

say, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* The sword was in the man's hand. Suicide was in his soul, when, from the depths of the dungeon, the very man who had been so ruthlessly scourged, was heard to shout loudly, *Do thyself no harm; for we are all here.* Never did any disciple do more instant good to one who had despitefully used him. Paul's was not a premeditated forgiveness. It was immediate, spontaneous, enthusiastic. One hint of reluctance, one tremor in that loud voice, and the jailer would have lain, a dead man. Paul's was the piety that is ready at once for the emergency.

For the moment, the man could not believe his ears. Such idealism was too much for him, and he called for a light, he ordered an inquiry, he instituted an official investigation into the irregularities. His mind, like the mind of Thomas, would only believe what the eye has seen. The lantern disclosed Paul and Silas, two ragged, begrimed, pallid men, their clothes stained with blood, their feet black with bruises, their eyes aflame with love and sympathy. Before that vision of the indwelling Christ, statesmanship and officialdom and criminology fell prostrate. Nay, more—the jailer *brought them out*—removed them from the place of shame and enthroned them in the place of power—asking of them what their solution was for the problem of evil—*What shall I do to be saved?* This man who lived by punishing others was brought himself under knowledge that he also was undone. The convicts who had Christ exercised supreme authority over their jailer who had only Cæsar.

The man's question was selfish. It sprang

straight from the inner egotism of the society in which he lived. He did not want to know how to help the crowd of wretched prisoners around him. He had no idea of relieving the aches and weariness of Paul and Silas. But at least he knew that some one beyond himself must be his Saviour. And the apostles did not expect to find in him the Christian virtues before they had brought him to Christ. They did not tell him to reform the prison, to bind up their wounds, to do justice to the helpless; they left all that to the Master. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,* they said, *and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* Know Him—study Him—as the man Jesus, who shares your nature, as the Anointed Messiah, who dominates history, as the Lord, Who claims a personal obedience. Know Him, and obey Him, which is the meaning of belief, and you will be safe—how, makes no matter, but the fact will be exactly thus. You will be safe and so will your house—so will society—so will nations and empires—thrones and republics. In belief, you have the alternative to Bolshevism.

A belief, mind you, with understanding. Many were the hours that night which Paul and Silas devoted to uttering God's word in the jailer's dungeon—to making God's meaning plain—and their example spoke not less clearly. While they sat and talked, they also suffered and, in their suffering, they displayed what Christ endured on the Cross. Slowly but surely, the barriers between Roman and Jew and between governor and his convicts were obliterated by kindliness and this rough proud man himself washed their stripes. It was his first confession of a changed heart.

The very water with which he thus served Him Who had washed His disciples' feet, was available for baptism, the ecclesiastical sign and seal of the dead past and the living future. But there still remained unaltered the prison system. Neither Paul nor Silas were yet liberated. And we can conjure up the moment when the jailer and his family, having received salvation and administered comfort, were about to withdraw for breakfast, leaving their new friends in the inner dungeon. That was unthinkable. To the imperative demands of the Redeemer, human law had to bow and the apostles, themselves asking for no mercy, were taken by the jailer to his home and nourished with food.

It was not the earthquake that rejoiced the family, but the companionship of the Christ. Yet a part only of His abounding love was all that they could contain. The prison still stood. The prisoners still languished. Much was left for future generations to accomplish. It was not Paul's idea that he should change systems. He manifested the Christ, and that was all. But he showed what he thought of the prison system when he asked the Corinthians if any one of them dared bring a brother in Christ before a tribunal of unbelievers. Not that he underestimated the wickedness of crime. He said that thieves and drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Nor did he suggest any particular immunity for saints and clergy. If they did wrong, they were liable, like anybody else, to pay the penalty. But he was convinced that no Christian should institute proceedings against another which might result in what he had

himself experienced in a Roman dungeon. How far our judgment of hard labour and solitary confinement would be modified if we had been under the necessity of submitting to it, I cannot say.

From this time onward thoughtful people have regarded prisons with a growing uneasiness. Measures have been passed in many countries which do at least mitigate their degradation for the young. We realize now that when a man or a woman comes into collision with society, there is fault on both sides. Allowance must be made for the conditions under which the accused person lived. Science discovers in the criminal a disease as well as an offense. To deter men from evil is not to cure them. Peter and Paul both uttered terrible warnings against wrong-doing, but their criminal code differed widely from that of the state. Malice, evil-speaking, hypocrisy, uncleanliness,—these were the sins that in their judgment brought men into bondage, and they thought that what men needed was not the incarceration in a material dungeon but the liberation of soul and will by the free Spirit of God.

XXIV

CHRIST FOR THE UNIVERSITY

JERUSALEM was a theological seminary; Athens was the leading university of the Old World. Whatever we mean by Oxford and Cambridge, by Yale, Harvard and Princeton, was summed up for the ancients by those philosophic schools where the systems of Plato and Aristotle and Epicurus were taught. As at Oxford, so at Athens, there had been martyrs like Socrates who died for freedom of conscience. By visiting Athens, Paul carried the challenge of Christ to scholarship in every land in every age. He founded the student volunteer movement. He inaugurated settlements among the poor. He prepared the way for Wycliffe, Latimer, Luther, Newman, Emerson, and John R. Mott. He declared that men must serve the Lord their God not only with all their heart and soul, but with all their mind.

Near to Athens was the obscure city of Berea. Few people could have placed Berea on the map, yet it was in Berea rather than in Athens that men's minds awoke. Both places wanted the latest thing, but while Athens listened and criticized, Berea searched and found. Athens was all that a college can be which ignores the Scriptures. Berea was what the humblest college may become where the Scriptures are read. Day by day, the students,

both men and women, plunged into the Bible. Taking nothing for granted, they verified the claims of Christ by invoking the judgment of history. Where clever people only arrived at speculation or superstition, the Bereans were rewarded by a well-informed belief. With all its art and poetry, Athenian education lacked the essentials. The Bereans seized them.

Some people think that Paul approached Athens with a feeling of profound awe. That is not my reading of the narrative. His stay in the city was quite casual. Indeed he dismissed his companions and only waited in Athens at all because he wanted Timothy to rejoin him. He remained in the place three weeks only and never went back there. Not one of his known Epistles was written to Athens. The idea that Paul regarded Athens as a strategic position to be won at all costs is a myth. A lengthening experience had taught him that not many wise, not many learned people are chosen to set forth Christ, nor did he admit for one moment that the Divine Carpenter would owe any part of His triumph among men to intellectual snobbery. In Paul's sense of proportion, dons and specialists found their level.

What stirred the apostle was the folly of Athens. The place was full of idols. It was a vast cemetery, crowded with old notions, petrified into stone, or as they say at Oxford, the home of lost causes. At Athens, thought was fossilized and the passions of men and women were carved into curiosities. These dead theories were what the under-graduates were bidden to worship. About these, they composed theses. Over these, they inscribed their odes.

Around these, they wrote their commer
Words and formulas were the religion whic
practiced with restless dissatisfaction, con
welcoming whatever thing was new, provid
it was sufficiently trivial—some turn of a
some theory of date or authorship, some r
ment of evolution, some fresh calculation
distance of the earth from the sun, or son
tuous trick of a mathematical tripos. It wa
ever growing amazement that Paul watche
mental antics, and his whole being was arou
an indignant pity that useful lives should b
squandered.

In the United States Paul would have been
a good mixer. Where our classicists exha
jectives in praising Athens, the apostle w
terested rather in the Athenians. In the n
place he did not gaze at the buildings; he
with the people. He found that some of the
stoics, who substituted severity for happine
thought therefore that they were better than
Then there were the Epicureans, who believ
happiness was merely pleasure, and that goo
wine from the college cellar covers a multit
sins. Even in Athens there was a syna
Amid their idols, they had their university se
But the synagogue breathed paganism, a
Jews had no energy even to be hostile. Gree
Jews alike had fallen victims to pedantry, w
knowledge divorced from service and sa
These pedants were ready to play with Pa
child plays with puppets. Here was a fello
had no taste for Pheidias—here was a most
taining Philistine—a freak for the fair. Lil

staff, he babbled, and babblers, if not taken seriously, are amusing. So they brought Paul to the Areopagus, where they proposed to sacrifice him by their ridicule, as gladiators were butchered to make a Roman holiday.

The Areopagus, or Mars Hill, was an amphitheatre where the sword play shed no blood. It was the popular pulpit of the town, where you heard the latest preacher without loss of subsequent sleep. When Paul ascended the rostrum every bench was crowded. By the unanimous verdict of all competent persons, he rose to the height of a great argument. By birth and breeding, he was a Jew, an Hebrew of the Hebrews and a strict Pharisee. In Christ he had become a citizen of the world, able to discover at once a common ground of discussion between himself and people of an utterly different upbringing. Under his masterly dialectic, Athenian philosophy crumbled to dust. The wisdom of Judea which began with the fear of the Lord overwhelmed the wisdom of Greece from which the fear even of idols had been eliminated. Rationalism could make no rejoinder to reverence.

Paul's advantage lay in the fact that he approached the problems of life with a heart filled with the love of Christ. You Athenians, said he, are too religious—too æsthetic—too academic. You think too much of the Cathedral and too little of the stone mason—too much of the painting and too little of the artist—too much of the automobile and too little of the mechanic—too much of the book and too little of the typist—too much of the statue and too little of the sculptor. I repeat—too much

of the statue, too little of the sculptor. Long, long ago such a sculptor had lived and had died, leaving behind him the first dim thought of Christ recorded in Greece. Watch that man as he holds the chisel and wields the mallet. He looks up and earnestly regards his model. As he looks upon that human face his wonder deepens. "There is something," says he to himself, "in this countenance which is more than Zeus, than Apollo, than Pallas, than any god, than any goddess conceived by our idolatry. In this man before me, and therefore in all men, there is a hidden divinity for which no name has been found. Some day, it may be that the god whom I discern in the face of my brother but whom I cannot define in any terms understood by Greece, will be incarnate in human flesh. But in the meantime, this my altar shall be dedicated to no mythological deity, but 'to the unknown God.'" In the vision of that sculptor was thus foreseen the Christ—the sculptor was the Isaiah of heathendom, stammering out what Hebrew poetry declared in its fullness. The seed fell into the ground and died.

This was Paul's text and from it he declared his good news. Over the entire range of Greek art and philosophy, he wrote the word "ignorance." The one art that matters is the art of life—the art of expressing God in one's self instead of expressing Him in silver and gold, in temples and idols, and the works of men's hands. To make material things live is not vital. But to accept life from the Eternal means everything. By no device can we add anything to God. All we can do is to seek Him, and feel after Him, as did that sculptor. God's children are not idols and statues, but men and women, and

amid our great buildings and noble monuments we must change our minds—we must repent—because it is not by an idol that we shall be judged, but by a Man, a duly appointed man, not a living being reduced to marble, but a dead Being raised to life. Since man as man is capable of being Very God, it follows that all nations are of one blood, and that differences between them are merely of time and of frontier. Though some nations are more advanced than others, though some nations dwell at a distance from others, all are concluded under one destiny. In Christ, there is neither Barbarian, Scythian, Bond nor Free.

In advancing this argument, Paul did not appeal to Greeks by quoting Hebrew. He found Christ in their own poets. He was a missionary who would prove Christ to Mohammedans by reciting the Koran, and to the Chinese by references to Confucius, and to Hindus by allusions to Buddha. No man has ever been able to teach other men without bearing witness, consciously or unconsciously, to the Son of Man. Prophecy is not an exception or a miracle—it is universal.

Paul once wrote to the Corinthians that the last enemy to be destroyed is death. In the power of death, every Athenian firmly believed. It was when life was mentioned that they became sceptics. Even in Egypt they were thinking about these things more truly. Where the Greeks turned their great men into stone, the Egyptians turned them into mummies, and even buried them in the sand as a child is born, being firmly convinced that somewhere and somehow, they would rise again from the dead. The thought of Egypt was older than

the thought of Greece and it was nearer to God. Where the Egyptian inscribed his Book of Judgment, the Greek merely mocked or procrastinated.

In the annals of the human race there has never been a man so great as Paul and at the same time so humble. In himself he was nothing but a tent-maker, but in Christ he was an Ambassador and Plenipotentiary. The University of Athens had to learn two things, first that the way of salvation is not by ridicule, and secondly, that even the cleverest people cannot choose their time for receiving the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The professors who said that they would listen to Paul again about this matter had no such opportunity. He left them to their art, their culture, their intellectual superiority and their inevitable decay. Of all those doctors and professors and deans and orators, not one name has escaped oblivion, except by the permission of Paul himself. When the crowd separated two persons remained behind and those two persons have achieved immortality. They were the successors of that nameless sculptor who found the Unknown God in the face of his fellow man. One was called Dionysius the Areopagite, the man dedicated to the philosophy of pleasure, the leader of his secret society, the captain of his college club, the winner of his university prize, who yet needed something more than academic honour and found it in Christ. The second was a woman called Damaris, the forerunner of Newnham, and Girton, and Vassar, of the school-teacher and the business girl, who insists on living her own life and thinking her own thought, yet finds that she needs Christ. Others were interested, but

these two were the leaders, these two clave unto Paul, and in Athens these two became the people who mattered. And from that day to this it is Dionysius the Areopagite and Damaris, the girl graduate, who have preserved the universities of Christendom from the ruin which overtook the universities of ancient Greece.

The idea that intellect stood between the others and the Gospel is convenient but illusory. In sneering at Paul, those Athenians doubtless thought that they were doing the clever thing. Time has shown how frivolous was their estimate of truth. Their trouble was not acuteness of mind but mental apathy. It was easier to chatter about philosophy than to understand God. What constantly impressed the apostles was the facility with which so-called learned men poured forth swelling words like clouds without water. The shelves in our libraries groan with such disquisitions by schoolmen of every age in whose learning there is no drop of refreshment for the poor, or of balm for the wounded. They and their writings pass away, ashes to ashes and dust to dust, while the simple allegories of a tinker at Bedford stand out immortal as the supreme examples of perfect English.

XXV

THE CHALLENGE TO CIVILIZATION

WHEN Paul sailed from Athens, failure stared him in the face. While his own heart was aflame with the love of Christ, to other men there seemed to be no beauty in the Redeemer that they should desire Him. Instead of sweeping through all lands, the Cause was retarded by an often barren controversy. In the Churches of Galatia, men and women who should have spread the good news were debating reunion with Judaism and interchange of pulpits and ritual observances. At Salonica, they wondered needlessly if the Lord would fulfill His promises and return to earth again, and if so, when, and how, and what in the meantime was happening to friends who have died and are buried. In such circumstances did Paul land for the first time in Corinth—the Chicago of Greece,—the London of the Balkans—where trade flourished and wealth was multiplied—where the Church could survive, if at all, only by making united headway against the distractions of luxury,—the theatre, the circus, the places of music and dance and pleasure and display. At Corinth, the trouble was not dogma but devilry, not dialectics but degradations, not prophecy but prostitution, not differences of opinion but chasms in conduct.

Here, therefore, Paul spent eighteen months and to the Corinthians he wrote his two most impassioned letters of appeal.

At first, the apostle himself hardly appreciated the magnitude of his venture. It was not to the market-place, not to the race-course, that he proclaimed the good news, but to the synagogue. There, in this strange, turbulent foreign community, was an oasis of Hebrew culture where he felt at home. For a time, it seemed as if, at last, there would be a living contact between the old faith and the new. Both were suffering persecution. Many Christians were expelled by the Emperor Claudius from Rome, and among them were Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. In their home, Paul gave comfort and received it. Guest and hosts were all three tent-makers and they sat together, working at their trade and talking about the Master. Paul was a man of Tarsus, brought up at Jerusalem. The other two came from Pontus on the Black Sea and were residents of Rome. Yet, in Christ, distance was obliterated, and their friendship rapidly developed. It was a friendship fraught with risks. In the mind of Paul, at this period, there was ever present the dread of personal violence. The fear that men would set on him and hurt him was, as we say, getting on his nerves. It disturbed his sleep and was only dispelled by a special vision in which Our Saviour came very near to him, to encourage him, to promise him safety, to assure him of much people in that city. Through these mental troubles, Aquila and Priscilla remained at Paul's side—as he put it, they were ready to lay down their necks for him,—and their

mere companionship—to quote from the Romans—saved Paul for the Churches. All cannot preach, all cannot expound, but there are those without whose sympathy and forbearance the preacher and expounder would fall far short. Such were Aquila and Priscilla.

The Jews of Corinth were of a liberal persuasion. They had dropped their Hebrew names and called themselves in the Greek and Roman fashion—Crispus or Sosthenes or Justus. The man, Crispus, was chief ruler of the synagogue. Under his influence Paul was allowed a full hearing, and the presence of Greeks at the services shows what the synagogue might have become if only Jesus had been accepted as the Messiah. With matters thus favourably proceeding, Silas and Timothy, who had stayed behind in Macedonia, rejoined the apostle. They talked over the position. It was critical. If a Christian synagogue were secured at Corinth, it might mean a Christian temple at Jerusalem. Paul was pressed in spirit by the sense of his opportunity. He testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Anointed One. He would have testified similarly to Socialists, to Moslems, to Buddhists, to Confucians. For men and women of every faith,—"here," he would have said, "is your Hope, your Fulfillment."

The issue lay in the balance. Some may think that one miracle would have decided it. But at that period no miracle occurred. With the ambassadorship of His servant, the Lord was satisfied and He was content that His love should be thus and only thus revealed. It was not with excellency of speech that Paul pleaded. He confesses that he

was in much weakness, in fear, in trembling, and that he avoided enticing words. His sole aim was that amid all the cross-currents of civilization, he might set forth Christ Crucified, a clear, solitary, compelling Figure, unmistakably visible to every Corinthian. If such a life and such a death did not win the hearts of the Jews, then, their blood be on their own heads—their blood, where Christ's was refused. They listened. They fully understood. But they opposed Paul with that final argument—"themselves"—their pride, their prejudices, their desires. Not being with Him, they were bound to be against Him. From mere resistance, they proceeded to aggression and aggression against Christ is "blasphemy." The supreme chance of a reconciliation broke down.

Many of us, writing of such an event, would say that, as a missioner, Paul was not an entire success. To use the common expression, he did not always "put it over." Even the Corinthian Christians would remark that while he could write strong enough letters, his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible. Paul did not deny this. Indeed he asserted it. What he thought about was, not his voice, his physical advantages, but his message. His case was that however rough and fragile might be the earthen vessel, it did, in fact, contain the treasure. A man who would only accept Christ when offered with eloquence, had not felt the need of Christ—had not appreciated what Christ was. He was like a man who throws away a priceless jewel because it is wrapped in brown paper. To the Jews of Corinth, as later to the elders of Ephesus, Paul declared simply that he

was "clean," that he was "pure from the blood of all men," that his obligations were discharged. He was not a virtuoso winning applause. He was a debtor, paying his way. And when he had paid what he owed to the Jews, it was his duty, at Corinth as at Antioch, to "turn to the Gentiles," to whom also there was a debt to be wiped out. Paul's account with the Corinthians and also, I think, with the Ephesians, was the more clear because it was his rule not to take money for preaching from those whose hearts had yet to be won. In his ledger, therefore, there were no Pauline items. Christ was the only asset and self the only liability.

The Jews of Corinth had heard doubtless that in many places it had been possible to put an end to Paul's propaganda by stirring up a riot against him. Apparently, it did not occur to them that, with every such riot, Paul pressed forward to provinces hitherto untouched. To fight spirit with matter—the Gospel with guns,—Bolshevism with bayonets—is a futile policy, and, at Corinth, the sectarians discovered to their astonishment that the lamp of progress was passing rapidly westward. Issues which loomed large in the old world were dismissed as trivial in the new. The academic quarrels which convulsed Iconium did not interest Gallio, the governor of Achaia. He listened with impatience and then drove the disputants from his judgment seat. "Deal with the morals of the people," said he, "and I will pay attention. Otherwise, don't waste my time." The Jews suddenly discovered that their world was not the whole world. With all their intensity of conviction, they were a mere fraction of the common people whom Gallio governed and God

loved. Instinctively, those common people began to understand that if the Jews were against Christ, it was chiefly because Christ was for the Gentiles. For the first time, therefore, in the history of the faith, the Gentiles turned on the Jews and seizing Sosthenes, a ruler of the synagogue who had opposed Crispus, they beat him, Gallio still remaining wholly unconcerned. So began at Corinth the dreadful tale of Hebrew persecution, of torture, of massacre, of pogroms, which continues unto this day. Why the Jew should be thus excluded from many clubs, confined in ghettos and often suspected or disliked, is a question only to be answered by asking another—why the Jew on his side persists in those qualities which somehow challenge his supreme Leader and Martyr?

With Paul driven out, all interest in the synagogue evaporated. History was transferred to a little house, which a man called Justus lent for the services of the Church. Justus worshipped God and as the years rolled on, his house, hard by the synagogue which seemed so unimportant to Jews and Greeks alike, grew into a mighty cathedral—St. Paul's—rising above the metropolis of a mighty power,—great institutions like the Vatican and the headquarters of the Y. M. C. A.—vast tabernacles whose tens of thousands can hear the Gospel at once—noble abbeys, enriched by the dust of kings and statesmen and poets and thinkers. Such was the triumph of the faith which in a prosperous seaport could be at home in the humblest private dwelling.

Lewdness—said Gallio, bluntly—that is the problem! As the civil magistrate, he saw the corrup-

tions of a great and wealthy city. As an apostle, so did Paul. His letters to the Corinthians were written because in the Church itself, there was this lewdness. The Christ therefore accepted Gallio's challenge, and presented through Paul a new way of living and dreaming and thinking. At Corinth, there began the age-long battle by the followers of Jesus against immorality and intemperance, the struggle of light against darkness, the desperate endeavour to establish right living amid a wrong environment. On social reform, Paul's letters to Corinth are the basic treatises—the Newton's Principia—with which all subsequent thinking has to reckon.

And Sosthenes, what of him? It is only by careful reading that one can trace the exquisite thread of the minor biographies in the early Church. Sosthenes was a Jew with a Greek name, who wanted and who won the best of both worlds. A ruler of the synagogue, he was well known to the Gentiles, and in the pogrom, he was seized and beaten. With justice denied him, we can easily imagine the state of his mind. Left to himself, Sosthenes would have become the Jew of the middle ages, embittered, humiliated, subtle, but happily there was in Corinth a man who was also a Jew, who had also been beaten, who was yet unembittered and sincere. That man was Paul. How he won Sosthenes for Christ we are not told but we have the result. Sosthenes accompanied Paul on his subsequent journey and it was the name of Sosthenes that Paul included with his own in his first letter to the Corinthians.

XXVI

THE FIRST SCANDAL

WHEN Paul left Corinth, there was established in that city the supreme example of a wealthy and successful Church. In every direction you could see a constant, even dazzling activity. Congregations were numerous. Competent teachers expounded the Scriptures. Far-sighted prophets mapped out the future. People were especially appointed to act as doctors and nurses for the sick. Women's ministry was recognized. Also, the Church selected apostles or missionaries, whose chance of telling the good news to others was reckoned by Paul to be the most important of all and was placed first among spiritual gifts. Rich and poor mingled together. There were many humble. There were also Erastus, the city chamberlain, and Gaius, wealthy enough to offer hospitality to the entire household of faith.

The pulpits of Corinth were famous and to receive a call to occupy one of them was the ambition of the clergy. It seems that Peter, with whom was his wife, delivered a course of sermons, and a great preacher, called Apollos, trained at Alexandria, was recommended to Corinth from Ephesus. Church members got into the habit of comparing preachers, liking one and disliking another. The absent are

always wrong and in this rivalry Paul's influence was challenged. As preaching became eloquent and learned, the simplicity of Christ, about which alone he cared, was obscured. And soon there began to form parties or sects which, if tolerated, would rend the Church into schisms.

At Pentecost, the gift of tongues meant that men and women could hear of the Redeemer in terms easily understood. But the Corinthians cultivated tongues as a performance,—to mystify and to please the senses; they sang the melodious and complicated yet indistinctly worded anthem; they listened to sonorous perorations; they intoned a Latinized Litany; the more ignorant converts would reiterate well-meant but unhelpful prayers and enthusiastic yet self-centred personal testimonies. Gradually the services lost their especial quality as disclosures of Christ in the midst. Women would gossip or ask hasty questions or put on extravagant clothes. The Holy Communion became a banquet, whether of food or of colour or of music, in which He was apt to be forgotten Who alone should have been remembered. The more thoughtful Corinthians were disturbed. They talked matters over. And finally they decided to consult Paul. In difficulty, children know who loves them best. When the first gross scandal burst over their Church, it was not to Peter, it was not to Apollos that the Corinthians turned for help. They sent to the apostle who had made for them the biggest sacrifice. They had had ten thousand instructors, but not many fathers in the Gospel.

Paul's handling of the situation was masterly. First, he despatched Timothy to conduct a private

enquiry. Next, having thus verified the facts and sought a confidential remedy in vain, he entered fearlessly upon open diplomacy. His earlier letter to the Corinthians is a document which would have passed none save a Christian censor. With this evidence before him, no one who would accuse the disciples of nameless vices need apply for proofs to the lampoons of a satirist. Paul is a chief witness for the prosecution. So immeasurably greater was the offence against God than the offence against man that he did not care very much what man thought. Nothing was right for Christians which was wrong for others and Christian ethics were only higher than Pagan ethics when Christians made them so. Also, Paul listened to no secret slander. If the household of Chloe brought forward the charges, the household of Chloe must put their names thereto. Every one must know that Paul had talked also with Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achiacus. They who carried mere tittle-tattle received short shrift from the apostle of the Gentiles. So accurate was his diagnosis of the position, as set out in the first epistle, that it stands uncorrected in the second.

Every doctor knows that one root of bitterness may cause diverse symptoms. A fever like measles will at once raise the temperature and cover the skin with spots. A bad tooth will at once swell the face and stiffen the fingers with neuritis. Paul treated the Corinthians with scientific skill. He took all their many troubles—jealousy, frivolity, vice, gluttony and so on—and he reduced them, one by one, to the same cause within the heart. Read the first Corinthian epistle, chapter by chapter, and

note the unerring wisdom with which every evil is traced to a single origin. Sum up these glowing chapters and they mean that the people were asserting themselves instead of holding forth the Christ. The dress, the gossip, the feasts, the miracles, the incest were all a kind of egotism and the difference between a selfish bazaar and a selfish drinking bout was only in form. Even over the resurrection, there were disputes which, though theological in form, only implied a battle between self and self. Since nature abhors a vacuum, it follows that Christ cannot be absent in any measure from our being without something or some one else taking His place. Since the reason for all our troubles is our distance from Him, the remedy for all trouble must be to set Him once more in the midst and think out our affairs with Him for Guide. The two letters to the Corinthians show us how even the most painful problems may be solved by bringing the minds of men and their wills back to the attitude of reverence for the inner and often hidden majesty of the Redeemer.

In every age people have denounced the worldliness and wickedness of the Church. Historians have written about the decay of religion either with cold precision or with picturesque art. Cynics like Voltaire have revelled cheaply in the failure of a goodness to which they did not themselves trouble to aspire. In the vices of their neighbours preachers have often found a suitable if shallow field for pulpit eloquence, and pastors have resigned because "no Christian can preach to a fashionable congregation." The disciples also knew how and when to let loose the flood-gates of their zeal

against depravity. Their schedule of prohibition, as defined in several of the extant writings, was more drastic by far than any yet applied to a modern state. James laid it down that friendship with "society" is enmity against God. Peter held that presumptuous and self-willed men who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanliness and speak evil of dignities, shall utterly perish in their own corruption. Jude declared that the sensual person has not the Spirit. John identified a deceiver of the Church with anti-Christ and told the elect lady not to show him hospitality since any one bidding him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds. And finally, in the Apocalypse the situation of evil-doers who persist to the end is defined with appalling lucidity. The unjust man may remain unjust, the filthy man may remain filthy, but the time must come when the dogs and the sorcerers and the whoremongers and the murderers and the idolaters and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie shall be shut out from the City of God. Our Lord's command that if thy hand offend thee, then cut it off, may seem severe but surgery has justified this treatment. In hospitals it is done every day. Writing to Corinth, Paul applied this rule to personal habits. Far better, said he, that we eat no meat at all than cause a brother to stumble. What is sold in the shambles may be as innocent as industrial alcohol, but, none the less, eating and drinking will do harm unless the aim be to glorify God. It was a banquet at Versailles that stimulated the terror in Paris. A simple diet may save the community from social revolution. Paul's condemnation of evil spared no one, not even himself. When he wrote to Corinth

he was like a physician who is called upon suddenly to inflict an agonizing operation on his own wife. By every one of his strokes he was wounding his own flesh. And in his second letter, when the Church was out of danger, he confesses to his much affliction, his anguish of heart and his many tears. His fear was that under the sting of his censure the converts might doubt his affection and there is an exquisite tenderness in the way in which at the end of his first letter he offers them the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and then adds *My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.* It was perhaps the only time that Paul thus sent his love, and even here he was showing forth the suffering of the Saviour. Confronted by the sins of men, Jesus of Nazareth argued, appealed, denounced and worked miracles of restoration. All this failed and, at Calvary, there was only one thing that He could do, and that was to lay bare His breast and with hands and feet helpless, with lips too parched to persuade men further, allow the world to watch the beating of His very heart. Similar to this was Paul's conduct to the Corinthians. After blushing bitterly at the exposure of their wrong-doing he wrote them a second letter of uttermost comfort, born of his own pain.

If the pastor of one of our churches had taken his people to task for the many faults which Paul had found in the church at Corinth I wonder what would have been the effect upon his pew rents. I am not surprised that many Corinthians threatened revolt. Those who did not repent of the sins that they had committed took offence. Echoes reached the apostles of debates, envyings, irritation, secret

and open slanders. This being so, there arose in an acute form the question whether a church is subject to authority. If Paul had belonged to certain catholic communions he would have laid claim to an ecclesiastical appointment. He did indeed declare that in nothing was he behind the very chiefest of apostles but he based his power with God and with man on one thing only, and that was his experience of Christ. With Christ he had suffered. For Christ he had toiled and travelled. Of Christ he had seen the vision. And by the grace of Christ he had conquered infirmity. Tearing aside his natural reticence, pocketing his patrician pride, he boasted like a fool because only thus could he boast of the Redeemer, Whose thorn rankled in his side.

The appeal went home. A few of the Corinthians continued to backbite, but the many honourably repented. A year or two before they had been sunk in paganism,—they had known nothing even of the Old Testament—their very religion had been vice. Yet at Paul's rebuke their hearts were touched with a genuine sorrow for sin. Their minds were changed. Of their conduct, they became infinitely careful. They cleared themselves of evil. Indignation, fear, desire, zeal, and a sense of justice inspired their reforms. So far as we know, not one of these men left the Church for another less exacting. Not one reduced his tithe. Indeed, it is characteristic of Paul's glorious audacity that he accompanied his rebuke here, as of the Galatians, with a request that the strong bear the burdens of the weak—that collection be made for poor saints in Jerusalem. I do not find in the early Church any apostolic anxiety to keep men in mem-

bership who wanted to go out. No club ever formed was more sensible of its privileges—more jealous of its dignity. What terrified the disciples was the dread that conceivably they might forfeit their communion. And they compared this fate to the fall of lost angels from heaven, to the blackness of darkness forever.

Thinking about this lofty sense of what discipleship means—how negligible is all else by comparison—I am at a loss to explain such a phenomenon, so rapidly developed in a city like Corinth, except as a proof that the Gospel is, in very fact, what Paul had called it, *the power of God unto salvation.* When Paul faced the world, he offered not a compromise but an alternative. On the Corinthians, in their shame and disgrace, he poured forth yet more abundantly the treasures of his spiritual resources. It was to them that he declared for all time the mystery of the resurrection. It was to them that he described for all time the Holy Communion. It was to them that he set forth, in a passage which secular criticism regards as immortal, what God means by love. In the worst of these men he assumed a capacity for the best, and his faith was not disappointed. From the worst, the best did emerge.

In one glaring instance, a son had taken his father's wife and Paul went so far as to consign the man to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. The choice before this fellow was excommunication or surrender. On the one side was the world of Corinth with its gaiety and its tolerance. On the other side was the little society of the faithful with their stern disapproval. The man had to decide living

where nothing would be said and living where everything would be said—between people whose private life was nothing and people to whom nothing mattered except private life. It was the beginning of the great struggle between Christian standards and secular customs—the struggle imperfectly expressed in the battles between Popes and Emperors—and at Corinth the offender stepped humbly to his Canossa. If Paul had been Pope Hildebrand, he would have kept him waiting for three days in the snow; that also was the idea of the Corinthians. He had caused them no end of grief. He had brought them into disgrace. The church which actually included Erastus, the public treasurer of the city, was humiliated and raised its eyebrows. But Paul, who had been pained more than any of them, took back the offender to his very heart. For a penitent man, there was, as he knew, ample room in the heart of the One Lord.

So ends what we know about the scandals of Corinth. Other matters are mentioned in the epistles to more than one church, but not this. With Corinth, as with Galatia, Paul dealt direct with those who were at fault but wrote not an iota about the affair to others whom it did not concern. What admirable gossip it would have made, let us suppose, for the Romans, or the Philippians, or the Colossians! How apt an example for the Ephesians! Paul kept silent. Even in the Acts, where the possibility of Timothy visiting Corinth is recorded, there is no allusion to the object which he had in view. No paragraph appeared in the religious press. No note was written for the diocesan report. Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, and while

insisting on the truth beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and last but not least endureth all things. Paul's aim was edification, not destruction,—building up, not pulling down, and, in saying good-bye to his friends, he tells them to be perfect, of good comfort, of one mind, to live in peace.

In drafting this brief note on Paul's difficulties at Corinth, I sometimes have thought that nothing is needed for a spiritual revival within our churches save that ministers and laity alike,—for in this respect Paul drew no distinction between them —should devote a week or two to realizing in its fullness Paul's pastoral solicitude for this one tempted and essentially modern community of saints. In those epistles, you find that sense of social obligation which is illustrated in George Herbert's famous essays on the character of a country parson. No officer in the church, if so inspired, can fail of the mission entrusted to him, whether it be the pulpit, the altar, the Sunday School, the hospital or merely doorkeeping in the house of the Lord.

XXVII

THE CONQUEST OF MYSTICISM

HOWEVER absorbing be our politics, our wars and our pleasures, there will always be men and women, millions and millions of them, who will yearn for something more than these,—some unseen reality—some mystical clue to their strange and often sad existence. Thousands enter monastic institutions every year, not only in Christian lands but in the East. Thousands practice spiritualism and organize dubious *séances*. And happily there are also thousands who have found in Christ the answer to their questions.

In the Roman Empire we find exactly the same craving for mysticism. "Asia" was not then a continent but a little province, clinging to the coast of the Ægean, where the people, half Greek and half Oriental, hardly knew what faith to adopt but did earnestly seek some clue to their soul's secret. With infinite labour, they had built for themselves a mighty temple to a corrupt Diana. As mascots and charms, they carried silver images of the goddess, so acknowledging the Unseen without understanding the nature of It, which is the essence of superstition. Like the mediæval alchemist and many elaborators to-day of prophetic and eschatological systems, they collected curious books, even prac-

ticed perilous arts, and as they felt blindly in unseen space, they even took chances on the Devil. It was a pathetic spectacle—this sincere, elaborate, futile, groping for the Light. Often the search ended in quagmires of deception and immorality. But it was none the less a real search, a true quest for the one ultimate Companionship.

At first, Paul was frankly unsympathetic. His mind was directed to Rome, Spain, the boundless and rapidly advancing West. There, as he thought, lay the future of mankind and of the Christian Cause. The Spirit within him would not permit him to turn aside to this little Asiatic community—this Tibet or Korea or Siam. When he reached Troas he pressed forward into Macedonia, leaving Ephesus behind. Even when he was returning by way of Ephesus to Jerusalem for the feast, he only paid a hurried call, spoke once or twice, and gave a promise, conditional upon God's will, that he would return when the feast was over. It did not occur to Paul that Ephesus would be his home for three years, the very climax of his missionary career—that Ephesus would claim his dearly beloved Timothy as pastor and Bishop—that Trophimus the Ephesian would cost him his life—that to Ephesus and Colosse near by he would write his two profoundest epistles—that in the Ephesian Asia would arise not one Church but seven—and that dwelling amid these seven churches, as a priest dwells among the seven lampstands before the throne of his God, John the apostle would unfold in one gorgeous tapestry of symbolism the sombre and splendid glories of divine Providence and human destiny.

What drew Ephesus, as India and China and Corea are drawn to-day, into the glorious ambit of Christian revelation was a readiness to listen—a hirst for God. Not only did they hear Paul eagerly whenever he addressed them but they welcomed Apollos. He came to the city from Alexandria, as a reform or liberal Jew—as a Jew who believed that his faith was meant to help the world to-day—and a few conversations between Apollos and Aquila and Priscilla, who had also been reform Jews, convinced Apollos that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, so long awaited. This he declared and about twelve men believed him. Like Jesus, they were baptized into John's baptism. They confessed their sins. They gave up worldly habits. They established in their hearts the non-conformist conscience, the Puritan Sabbath, the protest against theatre, and alcohol, and gambling. The Christ Who denied Himself became their Christ and in giving up their pleasures for His sake they showed their love and gratitude, they declared their salvation. The Christ Who brings joy and laughter and happiness was for them, however, a future Friend, sung about in hymns, waiting for the saints to join Him in heaven above, but not yet a present, an actual possession. Sundays were dull. People accused the converts of living as kill-joys, of condemning the customs of others without suggesting better, and the number of Christians therefore remained about twelve—it was stationary. All the eloquence of Apollos and his zeal could not increase the company of the faithful. The long face did not attract. People preferred to sin with a smile.

Paul saw at once what was the matter. *Rejoice,*

he would write to the Philippians, *and again I say rejoice.* Do not be content with believing in the Lord, and confessing to the Lord, and serving the Lord, but *rejoice in the Lord*—have a good time because He is with you—enjoy a jest—spread good cheer—receive the Holy, the Happy Spirit—sit with Christ in heavenly, which means happy places —revel in goodness and exult. John's baptism is admirable, but don't throw cold water on yourself all the time. You are truly buried with Christ in baptism, but remember that He rose again, ate broiled fish and honey from the comb, prepared hot breakfast for His apostles, and talked so brilliantly that their hearts glowed. In Him, you also may be as excellent company as He was.

This was the Spirit that these twelve Ephesians received. They needed Him as much as but no more than the apostles themselves. He was given to them, precisely as to the apostles, and with precisely the same results. He was thus made the universal Companion of all who wish to help Christ in His task of brightening the homes and the hearts of men and women. Their outward ceremony was Paul laying his hands on their heads. Your outward ceremony may be reading a book or hearing an address. In all cases, the ceremony means the same thing—that as children are fondled on the head, as children study a lesson book or sit in school to be taught a lesson, so must we as children welcome the Holy Spirit.

And as children, we then learn to lisp the language of Christ. With happiness in their hearts, these Ephesians conversed in a new vein—they interested others—prophesied, said things that

sounded fresh, unexpected,—that illuminated men's countenances—explained men's problems. Paul's own strength was invigorated. On the cricket ground, there is a saying that good fielding makes weak bowling strong and strong batting weak. I imagine that to baseball also the proverb may be applied. It is the practice of Charles M. Schwab to refer to his work-people as colleagues who serve, not *under* but *with* him. This was what happened at Ephesus. The witness of the congregation emboldened the pastor. Because they were at his back, Paul argued in the synagogue with ever growing courage. His friends talked up the cause of Christ because it was their own. As in other places, Judaism closed its doors, but this no longer mattered. The school of Tyrannus was available. It made no difference what hall was hired provided that Christ was the offered gift to men. For two years the mission continued. But with mere listening, the new disciples were not content. They walked forth from Ephesus, visited the towns near by, started churches not less zealous, not less promising, at centres never seen, so far as we know, by Paul—Philadelphia, Laodicea, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira and Sardis. There were also Colosse, and Troas, and other strongholds of the one triumphant evangel. This was not Paul's sole work, for no one man could have accomplished it. It was the work of the accepted and active Spirit. It was the word of God that mightily grew and prevailed.

Paul's situation at this time was truly astonishing. At Corinth, they were trying their utmost to discredit him. In Galatia, there was a strong move-

ment to destroy him. He was attacked from both sides, by those in Achaia who desired license and those in Judea who imposed bondage; and his heart was broken by the letter of condemnation which he had just written to the Corinthians. His utmost success was thus the climax of sorrow and his biggest victory cost him the most dearly. It was Ephesus that, as we shall see, robbed him of life itself.

By nature, Paul was hardly a great organizer. Despotic in temper, fanatical in impulse, he carried things through by his own sheer force of will. We have noticed how for a time he lost John Mark and broke with Barnabas. But, as years passed, he gathered around him an incomparable band of comrades,—Timothy, Luke, Silas and the rest—to whom he readily entrusted tasks, like dealing with Corinth, of the utmost delicacy and importance. The secret of Paul's influence over these men was simple enough. As Christ confided in him, so he confided in them, relying absolutely on their readiness to do for Christ whatever he himself would do. He used the layman, expected of the layman his own standard of service, and the layman followed him to the lion's mouth.

Hence his difficulty over the Gentiles. Timothy he had circumcised. On Titus he laid no such burden, and the Jewish converts began to murmur. Now arose a third case, more critical still, and Paul did not flinch. The young man's name was Trophimus and he was plainly an Ephesian, with no pretension of any kind to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. He wished to join Paul and Paul welcomed him. Years later, Paul mentioned him as an asso-

ate in travel whom he left at Miletus sick. The
uestion was whether Trophimus should go with
aul to Jerusalem, as well as to other places, and
ren enter the Temple. Was the layman to be al-
wed within the communion rails? Was man as
an the shrine of God or was a certain man or a
ass of men the shrine because they were priests
id ordained, by hereditary or other succession?
aul did not hesitate. He was as friendly with
rophimus in Jerusalem as he had been friendly
ith him in Ephesus. Race and colour made no
fference.

The penalty which Paul paid will be described
ter. The point here is that Ephesus rallied
ound a missionary who, like our modern mission-
ies, was a tribune of the people against privilege,
vindicator of social and international equity. He,
ho was the same man at Jerusalem as he had been
Ephesus, whose fidelity was proof against the
ductions of environment, found himself suddenly
ndowed, owing to no volition of his own, with
owers which were according to their faith. They
anted Paul to write in their albums, to bless their
rayer books and Bibles, and to heal their sick.
or this purpose, they took aprons and napkins
om his body and these became the symbols of the
iraculous.

In the days of her first love, the Ephesian Church
as no more infallible than she proved to be later
hen she tolerated the Nicolaitines whom God con-
emns. Here was manifestly the beginning of that
se of relics which we find at Lourdes and other
laces. The one question was whether there was
ehind the napkins and aprons a living or a dead

man, and within the man, a living or a dead Christ. In Paul Christ was alive, and it was the living Christ that wrought the special signs. So inspired by Christ, Paul was at that moment a dictator. On the superstitions of Ephesus he might have built a vast fabric of ecclesiastical ceremony, surrounding himself with the gorgeous raiment of a mediæval prelate. He refrained. He so taught the believers that they threw off their old ideas, surrendered their curious arts and made bonfires of their books, to the immense sum of fifty thousand pieces of silver. So complete was the emancipation of the intellect that after this conflagration we hear no more of them using napkins and aprons as charms against disease. In writing to the Ephesians, Paul substitutes for such devices the Christian Armour, acquired not from some saint at some shrine, but received from God direct and put on by the warrior himself, with his own hands, because his heart is great with the indwelling Captain of Salvation. The impotence which applied aprons and napkins was transformed into the power which girds the loins with truth, bears proudly the shield of faith, carries aloft the saving helmet and wields, hither and thither, the two-edged sword of the Spirit. In that same letter, Paul, the wonder worker, calls himself "less than the least of all the saints" and the Spirit, writing to Ephesus from Patmos, does not even mention him. So magnificent was the name of the Lord Jesus that they forgot every other.

The temple of Ephesus has long since disappeared. If the goddess Diana survives, it is because she is a much more recent and attractive per-

sonage than her wooden prototype. But the name of Ephesus lives on, like the name of Gettysburg or Verdun, because here was fought to a finish one of the decisive battles in this planet for human happiness. The Jews who lived by exorcism were doubtless vagabonds, but at least they understood the issue. They did not go about pretending that all the devils died with Darwin. And they knew that Jesus, as preached by Paul,—Jesus in the fullness of His Divinity—could alone eradicate diabolism from men's hearts. They realized that a change of system hardly affected the inner evil. The only thing wrong with Sceva and his seven sons was that they tried to do Christian deeds without possessing the Christian power. And, confronted by such well-meaning impotence, the devils leapt on them, tore the clothes from their backs, and left them naked of all pretensions to influence. Society turned them out of the house, wounded and helpless, so rebelling against an idealism which challenged abuses, only to leave abuses triumphant. The devils were candid enough. Jesus they knew and Paul they knew, but who are ye? Who is Lenine? Who is Gorki? Who is Trotski? Who is Robespierre? Who is Karl Marx? What soul have they ever delivered? Face the reckoning—*who are they?*

The failure of Sceva and his seven sons left Christ as the one sole supreme hope of the city. And then arose the inevitable stir which troubles every society, as dimly men discern what the claim of Christ really means. Sceva the Jew was succeeded by the Jewish metal merchant, Alexander the Coppersmith, and frankly Paul feared his mischief the

more. As instrument of error, Sceva was formidable, but much that Sceva said when he denounced devils like avarice, was perfectly true, whereas Alexander subordinated God and Devil alike to money, dividends, profits. His trade was not directly attacked. It was the silversmiths, not the coppersmiths, who made images of Diana and sold them. Alexander was the vested interest that keeps in the background, financing parties, subsidizing newspapers, and putting useful arguments into the mouths of other and less sagacious soap-box orators. It was Demetrius not Alexander who seemed to lead that riot. It was Alexander and not Demetrius who pulled the wires.

Into the theatre rushed the crowds, shouting, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.* And this was quite correct. Whatever the deathless spirit of man agrees to worship is in that sense great. It means much—either of good or of evil. As "the town clerk" told them, nobody denied it. Here was democracy in violent palpitation, fully awake, enjoying utter freedom of speech, complete immunity from despotic guidance. Yet something was lacking and this something was an aim, direction, objective. In startling contrast to the unity in Christ, some said one thing and some said another. The only thing to do was to dismiss the people, to dissolve the plebiscite, and to return to a lawful assembly, an ordered constitution, a bourgeois Parliament.

Who would have thought that those uproarious fellows, shouting themselves hoarse, and not knowing what they shouted about, were born and bred in the same city, speaking the same language

breathing the same air as the Christians? It is a contrast almost unbelievable. From the scene in that theatre, turn the page rapidly to the message of the Angel, who solemnly testified, "*I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast patience and for my name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted.*" So noble was the influence of that apostle, the prisoner of the Lord, who bade the Ephesians to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called.

XXVIII

THE HOPE OF HIS COMING

MANY persons have spent a lifetime of study and enjoyment of those passages in the Bible which tell us that the day must dawn when Jesus, the Christ, will come back to this earth. No picture of the first disciples would be true and perfect which failed to include in their mental equipment this brightest of hopes. So dearly did they love Our Lord's bodily presence that they longed to meet Him again in His very person. As men have said, "O for an hour of Gladstone," or "of Lincoln,"—so did these followers of the Christ pray, "Come, Lord Jesus." Conscious of the Christ within them, they wanted Him everywhere, and to this extent their wish was father to their thought. It was a noble wish. To yearn for the best is to live for the best. Our longings govern our deeds.

In an expressive phrase, there are topics that contain "dynamite," and the Second Advent has always been one of them. Many of the disciples were filled, as some saints of our own day are filled, with that curiosity which, in mundane matters, leads journalists to seek some confidential piece of news, some special information, or as it is put in my irreverent profession, "a scoop." Not less human were the disciples. They also wanted to know about times and seasons. They tried to put a date

to the millennium and mark down in their perpetual calendar the dreadful ultimatum of the second death. To the risen Lord Himself they addressed questions—as it were, they interviewed Him—and He firmly declined to share with them His Father's secret. Power for the present was His gift,—a call to immediate service—not speculations of the future. They were to go into all the world and prepare the hearts of men to receive Him, whenever in His own good time He should come back.

Some scholars tell us as if it were evident from the narrative that the early Christians expected the Saviour to return at once. These authorities argue that since this has been proved a delusion, it discredits the entire doctrine of His reappearing. If this theory is justified, then it would follow that in the later writings of the Christians you would find traces of disillusionment, explanations of a miscalculating prophecy, excuses, and doubts. That is not my impression of the epistles of John and Peter and the Apocalypse. Neither there nor in the prophecies of Christ, as reported in the Gospels, do I detect any shallow limitation of history to the brief period which preceded the fall of Jerusalem. I read, rather, of wars and rumours of wars, of nation rising against nation and people against people, of faith growing cold, of talk about the Lord's return being delayed, of calamities amid which the society of saints barely survives, of vials of wrath emptied in long succession on land and sea, of persecutions, revolutions, upheavals. This surely was not the language of short-sighted men. It reveals vision, as of an eagle, poised aloft and scanning the clouds on the far distant horizon.

Every movement, whether political or religious, must be judged by its responsible leadership. I do not suggest that each several Christian, either then or to-day, saw as clearly into the future as did the author of the Apocalypse. The disciples of Salonica, for instance, were plainly misled by a phrase in one of Paul's letters to them; they were misled into thinking that because the Lord would return suddenly, when people least expected Him, therefore, He would return at once. If this had been the authoritative conviction of the apostles, then Paul would have endorsed it. But what happened? Instead of so doing, he wrote a second letter to the Thessalonians for the express purpose of correcting an erroneous interpretation of his former epistle. I suggest that this second epistle is a warning to us all, not against interpreting Scripture, but against assuming our interpretation to be infallible. Comment is good, but modesty is better. The modesty of the Thessalonians enabled Paul to put them right without a single harsh word. Indeed, this is one of the two cases where Paul steps forward humbly as the critic of his own inspiration. Just as he warned the Galatians against accepting another gospel, though Paul himself should preach it, so he begged the Thessalonians not to be troubled or shaken in mind, even by a Pauline epistle. He drew a firm distinction between Paul the man and Paul the voice, between "my judgment," as he puts it, and the spirit of God. It is in this attitude of meekness that we should examine the destinies of the race to which we belong.

Wise men assure us that interest in Our Lord's return is only taken at times of grave social dis—

aster. I am so slight a scholar that I hesitate to challenge this dictum. Yet of the early Church it was surely untrue. Critics seem to imagine that the Macedonians of Thessalonica were all living under an oppressive sense of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, a city, nearly a thousand miles away, which few of them had seen. I cannot find one hint of it. Never was the Roman Empire in appearance more peaceful and secure than when the advent was debated. No volcano menaced the town; no invasion threatened the province. What the Salonicans wanted was an answer to certain questions which arise at every fireside. Here, said they, we are burying our dead. To what extent ought we to mourn for our departed? Are their spirits safe? When we meet Christ, shall we meet them? Are they happy where God guards them? Do they weep, suffer pain, fall asleep and awaken in the morning? It was not world war that evoked these questions. It was the register in the family Bible, the locket of hair on a mother's bosom, the fragrance of flowers on a mound of earth, enshadowed by circling hills. In our own day, some of the most widely circulated books and articles in the most widely circulated magazines deal with the situation of the departed.

Paul's answer was simple and scientific. From Corinth he wrote to the Thessalonians what he afterwards wrote from Philippi to Corinth. They who die and we who live are reserved together for one divine event. If they are raised incorruptible to meet an all-powerful and an all-glorified Redeemer, so, in Christ, will we also be changed into that same perfectly spiritual brotherhood. The triumph of

the Saviour, whenever it comes and whatever form it takes, means reunion and not separation. No one who loves Him and others in Him is lost in death, either to Him or to His who remain behind. So effective is His redemption that those who have trusted Him need undergo no purgatory of their own, but will be changed, as He was changed at the resurrection, in a twinkling of the eye, by an edict ringing like a trumpet, so that where He is, there will all of His be also. This was the sure and certain comfort that drew the ancient sting from the arrow of death.

For in the meantime, they who await His final call to endless service do hunger no more, neither thirst any more, nor does the sun light on them nor any heat. Sleeping in the everlasting arms of the eternal, Who in the days of our tribulation pitied us as a Father because He remembered that we were then dust, they learn that His hand wipes the tears from their eyes—yes, those tears also which have stained their faces.

* * * * * * *

There, on the shores of the Mediterranean, the disciples saw millions of men and women, passing to and fro in ships, on horses and camels, in chariots. All the essentials of modern locomotion were unfolded to their wondering gaze. The tramp of armies along the Roman highways, the pageants of amphitheatre and forum, the glorious display of glittering luxury, brought them into contact with men and women of every race and colour. They saw how the shadow of the empire spread from horizon to horizon until it included all that was known of

the human family. One rule was laid down for mankind—one authority was imposed—one league united the peoples. To what end, they asked, was all this developed? Under what monarch was human life to be thus centralized? When all persons would obey one edict, whose voice was to utter it?

It is mere perversion of facts to say that in putting these questions the disciples were obscurantist. Theirs was the spirit of science, breathing the universalism—the eternities of time and space. For all future investigation they laid the plans; with our telescopes and microscopes we have been merely filling in a few details. At Corinth, there were biologists who thought so much of the flesh and its phenomena that they denied the resurrection. The physical body, so they imagined, would be the only body—Eat then and drink, for to-morrow you die, and over your corrupted limbs, mindless of your love, your hope, your joy, your pain, will pass unheeding the Juggernaut of evolution, which permits the fittest only to survive until the fittest is cruelly superseded—the Devil taking the hindmost. So they talked at Corinth, while at Patmos, it was the politician who seemed omnipotent,—the statesman, armed with the terrors of persecution, their hands red with all the blood of the saints, content that millions be slain under their chariots provided that new empires rise where old empires have fallen. To the biologists of Corinth and to the politicians of Patmos, Paul on the one hand and John on the other,—the one by argument and the other by imagery—declared the inevitable victory of the Incarnate Good in Christ. With masterly insight they foresaw that this good and this evil would be per-

sonified in men, not dehumanized in systems, that missions would mean missionaries and empires emperors. Reasoning from the rules to which they could discover no exception, they concluded that the ultimate choice would lie, not between the Church and some different organization, but between Christ and "anti-Christ," or, as Paul expressed it, a man of sin who must be revealed. If their logic needs support, I do not turn for evidence to students of prophecy. Why should I? Look at the cartoons published during the great war. A favourite design, adopted by artists of many nations, was Christ confronting the Kaiser. One such picture will always be memorable. It appeared in the London journal, *Punch*, and showed the Kaiser cowering before the Cross—with a title, if I recall it aright, like this—"The Two Emperors." Dismiss Paul, seal up the Apocalypse, and the very plates of your printing presses cry out in the agony and the awe of man's inevitable drama.

There is a proverb that nothing is ever settled until it is settled right. That also was believed by the disciples. They did not anticipate a gradual and peaceful upward evolution from bad to good and from good to better and from better to the Best. Their idea was that just as the various régimes of Judaism—Patriarchal, Judicial, Royal, Ecclesiastical—broke down from moral and spiritual causes, so would kingdoms and empires break down, until that city of God arose in perfect splendour of obedience to the will of Him Who sits upon the Throne and of the Lamb. History corroborates their view. The Roman civilization collapsed. The Middle Ages crumbled. Modern monarchy

has tumbled into fragments. Democracy is on trial. Some of my friends believe what the disciples taught because it happens to be in the Bible. I may be pardoned for adding that I also believe it because I find it in the newspapers. At this moment I happen to be spending considerable sums cabling news messages across the Atlantic. If I cabled otherwise than in apostolic veracity, if I pretended that no war had been fought, that no revolutions were in progress, that no ships had been sunk, that no plagues were ravaging decimated nations, another correspondent would soon sit at this desk where the leaves of this my book intermingle with the carbons of my telegrams.

I am not suggesting that in every case the disciples understood at the time the full and ultimate force of the language which they were led to employ. When they spoke of all nations, they can only have dimly guessed at the vast populations of Asia. When they wrote of all lands, they knew not that they were setting out the fate of Australia and America. Their sea was the Mediterranean, while ours is the Atlantic and the Pacific. The more amazing is the miracle of thought and vision whereby, standing themselves on a limited platform, they expressed their ideals in illimitable terms. To the magnifying power of microscope and telescope there are certain discernible and final restrictions. But just as the music of Handel, though written for a small orchestra and company of singers, sounds only the grander as new instruments are developed and choirs are multiplied beyond the power of man to number, so does this early vision of Christ, descending from heaven with

a shout, with a voice as the trump of God,—this awe-inspiring conception of the love and power of the Son of Man, slain from the foundation of the world, grow in the imagination from century to century, until the reign of Him Who first came to serve, the authority of Him Who first came to suffer, the glory of Him Who first came to die, dawns on the entire human race, ruined by the measureless folly of human wisdom, as the one radiant hope of social and international salvation.

The second coming of Christ was not a topic which the disciples reserved for special conventions or courses of lectures. It was their background—the atmosphere that they breathed—the light by which they did their duty. Men, sitting in armchairs, find it hard to credit stories of the angel at Mons, but to the soldiers, faced there by death and mutilation, the very heavens declared the glory of God. These disciples also were in the front line of fire. To tell them of the past was not enough. The present demanded that the riddle of the future should include a certainty of victory. They must know that they were in a winning fight. As a housemaid sings at her work, so in doing their duties did these early Christians dream their dreams. Paul prepared his defence of the resurrection with the text—*Let all things be done decently and in order.* He closed his defence by urging the brethren always to abound in the work of the Lord. When he wrote to the Thessalonians on questions of prophecy, he was himself living at a very climax of practical and personal efficiency. The sense that they must prepare this our world for One Whose eye is quick to mark iniquity—Whose heart is

stirred by injustice and cruelty—Whose love extends freely to all men, however humble and ignorant, was to the disciples and may be to all who come after them the very simulus that people need for the noblest service in the darkest regions.

If there has been controversy over the Second Advent and over the Millennium and over times and seasons, it may be that the reason is a failure constantly to associate hope with service, prophecy with practical politics, and vision with obedience. The disciples were too busy to quarrel with one another over the second death. But they were not too busy to share with one another the ennobling dream of eternal life.

XXIX

PAUL'S PATH TO THE CROSS

THE tumult at Ephesus died down, leaving Paul in command of the position. He and his friends could move where they wished, without let or hindrance, to Philippi across the water, to Troas, to Mitylene. It was the zenith of Paul's career. Everywhere he went he was welcomed; his lightest wish was law; men and women wept when he departed. Yet by a supreme sacrifice he cut the ties which bound him to all these churches, whether in Asia Minor or the Balkans, and sailed for Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Pentecost.

The voyage was regretted by all his friends. They told him that he could expect at Jerusalem no fate except bonds and imprisonment. He was throwing away, as it seemed, an invaluable life, and for no obvious reason. He admitted himself that in his absence grievous wolves would enter the fold, not sparing the flock. Of his very converts, there would arise those who would speak perverse things, drawing disciples after them and thus away from the one Lord. How true was this forecast, we can perceive by glancing at the seven angels' letters to these very churches. A man, possibly the deacon, Nicolas, wandered wholly astray and started a sect called the Nicolaitines. There were others who ate

idolatrous dainties and practised fornication. At Thyatira, they were led by the woman Jezebel. Paul knew in himself that it would be so, yet he did not lift one finger to prevent by his own personal effort this ecclesiastical decay. He was content to utter a warning which was itself a pronouncement of doom.

Many may think that Paul was wrong, that he should have framed a creed, appointed trustees over church property, and defined a series of spiritual tests. Some system of clerical administration would surely have safeguarded these churches against the enemies within. A presbytery, a synod, a conclave, a Methodist conference, a diocesan council,—why was so little of this kind elaborated? It was because Paul knew that the disease lay deeper than organization and tenets. The Lord Himself had departed from this earth in order that His disciples,—however long it took them—might learn slowly but surely how to live their lives by the Spirit. Paul was one of the few men in any age who understood Christ and acted as Christ would have acted in his place. If the Church must not depend on the physical Jesus, much less must the Church depend on the physical Paul. Better no Church at all—as he told Corinth—than a Pauline Church. Better no preaching at all than a preacher who fills Christ's pulpit. So supreme a man was Paul that the time came when he had no choice save to leave the stage vacant. He had to show that what Christ did through him was not enough. It was his great renunciation—this standing aside for smaller men.

He knew that whatever words could accomplish

had been achieved. He had said all that had been given him to say. So well had he said it that he had trained a successor, Timothy, who could go on saying these things, not less well. By avoiding rhetoric and offering a plain diet, Paul taught the people to meet not for amusement but for worship, to listen for the voice of Christ, instead of seeking satisfaction in rhetoric, and there is no suggestion that with him away the attendance at divine service fell off. But experience at Corinth and in Galatia told him that sayings by themselves would fail—that sayings must be supplemented therefore by something more, by suffering, by sharing Christ's death, by showing forth His Cross. Others must meet persecution and Paul would set an example.

Happily for us the story of his voyage is told by one to whom, as to some famous diarist, every unimportant detail is dear. How Paul enjoyed the walk from Troas to Assos while the ship navigated the headland—how they touched at Mitylene—and came next day off Chios—and next day called at Samos, waiting at Trogyllium, en route for Miletus—it is all set down. Over these historic islands, this richly indented coast, the utter oblivion of moral sterility was even now settling and, for the audience which reads popular history, this itinerary of the apostle sheds the final ray of light on all that had been the boasted civilization of Greece. As Paul passed over the horizon, the landscape receded into a sudden darkness. When he landed in Tyre, it seemed as if a brief day again dawned. At Jerusalem, he was the central figure in that era of the Roman Empire and in the radiance of his heroism the notabilities, gathered for the last time around

Mount Zion, are for a moment reflected, to be forgotten when he departed.

Of that journey certain scenes stand out immortal. At Troas, the last evening had come. In an upper room, Paul spoke to a crowd until midnight. Lamps had been lit. The air became oppressive. But still, hour after hour, they hung on his words. For Troas, on the confines of barbaric regions, itself pagan and rationalist, Paul's was the only good news. No syllable of his could be spared. Suddenly, a young man called Eutychus either fainted or slumbered, and fell headlong from an open window. He dropped three stories and was brought up dead. At any rate, they believed this, and Paul's final message was obscured in a personal sorrow. One hint of a failure to sympathize would have ended forever their affection for the leader. But he stopped—stopped instantly—his argument, and revealed the heart that beat within. With the authority of love, he displayed a silent anguish which they only could watch with awe. Here was the apostle, flung to the earth, his arms holding the lad, his face at his very heart. He whose body was sore stricken with many stripes was as a mother when he saw any one else in pain. And love like Paul's was the best guide for a doctor. While others wept and wailed, he felt the faint pulse and knew that life still throbbed. Admirable as was Paul's theology, it counted as nothing beside his goodness to that one young man. What impressed them was not a miracle of healing but the miracle of comfort.

Instead of calling at Ephesus, he waited a few hours at Miletus, near by, whither he summoned

the elders of the Church. It was his last chance, as they thought, of setting out his views of Christ, His Truth, His divine nature, His further advent. But about these grave matters Paul did not then worry. The cause of Christ, he knew well, was safe. Nothing of that could ever fail. But of his own witness, he was sensitive. Honourably to finish his course was his eager concern.

At that moment of departure, he knew with the preternatural discernment of the dying that the security of the Church, as of every society, depends not on the beautiful symmetry of its written constitution, not on the elaborate correctitude of its dogmas, but upon the faithfulness of its officers to Christ, upon their independence of financial considerations, their ability to ignore the rivalries of wealth and fashion, their strict avoidance of graft or bribery or indefensible endowments. In all that makes for honest commerce and politics, in all that sets a standard whether for millionaire or socialist, Paul, by remaining poor amid success, played the pioneer. The fatal and often illusory opulence of bishops was not for him. *Feed the Church of God*, was his injunction, rather than mortgage it. Above all else, let the people have the Gospel without burden. Allow them no excuse for refusing it.

His closing sentence is of a peculiar interest. *Remember*, said he, *the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.* Commentators have rightly observed that nowhere do these words appear in any of the four Gospels. The quotation is thus unique. It is the one authentic instance of what has been called Pauline theology—his one addition or postscript to the records

of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Yet instinctively we feel that the saying rings true to the divine Authorship. Paul had arrived at a Christliness so evident that his words sounded often as if Christ Himself were speaking. If, as is probable, his companion at that time was Luke, and if Luke wrote both the Gospel and the Acts, then it was Luke, with his notes of Our Lord's utterances, who summarized this address to the elders, including its closing quotation. Than Luke, there could have been no higher authority on the proper use of the phrase. In this apparent discrepancy, we enjoy a rare and delightful glimpse into the silent process of reducing to paper the priceless oral traditions of the Messiah.

When Our Saviour bade His friends farewell, He led them away from the crowds, to the summit of the Mount of Olives, and there He was received into the Eternal Cloud. The sorrow of parting was over when He died upon the Cross. It was a sorrow that, in suffering with Christ, Paul shared. The elders of Ephesus embraced him, wept sore, and with sad eyes accompanied him to the ship. It did not occur to them in their grief that if Paul had stayed with them, there would have been for generations yet unborn no letter to the Ephesians. All—all of that incomparable teaching would have been lost forever. His face they were to see no more, but his message was for them and for all men intimate and everlasting. The little group stood on the quay, forlorn, as the ocean liner of those daring days breasted the uncertain Ægean.

Weather assisted the voyagers and Paul spared a week for Tyre. In that brief spell he so endeared

himself to the disciples that the very children came with their fathers and mothers to see the last of him. With the elders he had prayed, but in seclusion. Here, amid the rattle of ships' tackle and the movement of cargo, with seamen of all races roughly pursuing their hard tasks, there was seen the strange sight of Christ's family at worship, kneeling and praying, to a God unseen, unknown by Phœnicians. Of Paul's prayers, we know something from his epistles. No man ever sought nobler blessings for his comrades. We can almost hear him, as the sea washed that Syrian shore, raising his voice for the disciples of Tyre, as he prayed later for the Ephesians, that the God of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, might give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened that they might know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. For them, as for the Philippians, he would also pray that their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; or, again, as for the Colossians, that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to His glorious power. Paul's prayers were *ex tempore*, welling up from the heart, eloquent therefore at the lips, a sudden liturgy of which some few phrases resound through the centuries.

When I read the long list of places at which Paul touched on this journey to Jerusalem, I have the sense that I am following a martyr around the one

and universal Church of Christ and am pausing at what our Catholic brethren would call the stations of the cross. How easy to evade the final struggle at Jerusalem! What useful work lay waiting at Coos and Rhodes and Patara! A word would have secured a call at Cyprus and reunion with Barnabas, but the word was not spoken. Cyprus was "discovered" or sighted, and Cyprus was left on the left hand. Even Ptolemais, where the saints were saluted, only detained Paul one day, and the morrow found him in Cæsarea, at the house of Philip the Evangelist.

Thus were the threads of the drama gathered into one inseparable tragedy. Philip was now a married man with four daughters, all of whom were engaged upon Christian work—Sunday Schools, missions and so on. The progress of the faith seemed placid and secure. With his punctual eye on Pentecost, Paul lingered on from day to day. What decided him to leave was the arrival from Jerusalem of Agabus—the prophet of trouble,—who sees clearly enough that things are wrong and gets excited about it. He warned Paul that Jerusalem was no place for him to visit safely. Having met Peter, it is perhaps no wonder that Agabus enforced his words with the simile of binding with a girdle which Jesus had used to describe Peter's martyrdom. With Paul's girdle, he bound his own hands and feet. *Thus saith the Holy Ghost*, he cried, *So shall the Jews of Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.*

Then was brought to bear upon Paul the last and hardest trial, by which Peter had himself tested the

Christ, namely, the weak advice of valued friends. His companions in travel joined with the saints of Cæsarea in an effort at united dissuasion. They were the very cream of the missionary church. They were the men who of all others knew Paul's value. On their side, so far as I can see, was all the logic. The Lord and Stephen and James had been victims of Jerusalem; surely they were enough; why add Paul? If Rome was his aim, let him go to Rome, direct. I do not know how to answer this argument, save in one way. Within good men, there is an inscrutable purpose, known only to themselves and God. The seed had to fall into the ground and die. If Paul turned back, his name and his life-work would have been lost in the mists that were already enfolding the church. His greatest triumph of all was as prisoner.

For every soldier and sailor who leaves home to die, for every sick and suffering person who faces the surgeon or the fate of an invalid, Paul now becomes a comrade. He faced the weeping. He felt the heart-break. He endured the worst moment of all when they gave up the fight on his behalf and said, *The will of the Lord be done.* The crowded room was far different in appearance from the lonely Garden, but here, none the less, was Gethsemane. They gathered up their few possessions. They packed their baggage. And then they set out on foot for the city, now devoted to destruction.

The feast of Pentecost! Did it cross Paul's mind that, perhaps by God's Spirit, he might utter what would save the city from her doom? How well he knew her story! What memories of David, of Solomon, of Hezekiah, of Ezra, flooded the mind! Cor-

inth and Ephesus and Philippi—what were they to compare with Zion and Moriah? For Christ's sake he had loved the Gentile, but Jerusalem was enshrined in his heart. Among the patriots, who have offered all for their native land, Paul was conspicuous, but the trouble with Jerusalem was that in her politics there was no room either for Christ or Paul. The second, like the First, was cast out by a popular vote. As a prophet of electoral chances, Agabus, like Peter, was shrewdly right. Both candidatures were hopeless. Democratic in her institutions, with free speech and a free press to express her impulses, Jerusalem would not have the Best.

That walk from Troas across the promontory of Assos—how much it meant to Paul! Troas, the home of his ambition to win Macedonia, was the scene of his great renunciation. As Christ climbed the mountain while His disciples crossed the sea, so by an instinct did Paul, thus seeking the longer vision. After talking all night and wrestling with the Angel of Death, he needed the solitude and was fair, as always, to his nervous system, for that also belonged to Christ.

XXX

VINDICATING A PASSPORT

IN Paul's visit to Jerusalem there is involved the elemental right of men and women to travel freely over this planet. Christ Himself issued the passport when He said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," and every law, whether of extradition, immigration or deportation, must be made ultimately subject to this unchallengeable decree. Not for one moment would the apostle admit the right of the Jews to exclude either him or his friends from their city. He went to Jerusalem for the very purpose of asserting his title to such asylum. His presence there vindicated free speech as well as free travel. In him, at that moment, the unrealized liberties of all peoples to the utmost abundance of a noble life were summed up.

But it was only in Christ that Paul dared to claim such perfect freedom. Not as an anarchist, not as a zealot, not as a devotee of pleasure, did he knock boldly at the sacred gates of the City of God. The only reason why his social rights were absolute was that his personal rights had been surrendered; he was no longer his own; he was bought with a price; and to shut out Paul was not to exclude a Roman citizen merely, but to bar the right of will and way

to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. More and more, the world is recognizing that they who simply serve Christ are hindered at peril. When Edith Cavell is murdered, an empire falls. There was that in Cardinal Mercier which the most brutal of conquerors dared not maltreat. The immunity of the Italian artist is granted nowadays to most missionaries. They enter the zenana. They enter it because first they have braved the leper camp. To fire on the red cross, to torpedo the hospital ship, to bombard the nunnery, is like slaying the albatross. When the Jews seized Paul, the luck of Jerusalem, if I may apply the phrase in border minstrelsy, changed to certain destruction. The passions that broke loose against him were the same passions that defied the laws of Rome and provoked against Mount Zion the stern reprisals which laid her Temple desolate.

It is strange, indeed, that, in leaving Cæsarea, Paul should not have known where in Jerusalem he could lay his head. The message of Agabus showed clearly that in welcoming the Gentiles to his heart the apostle had become himself unwelcome. His host was, therefore, to be a man of Cyprus, an old man who doubtless owed his soul to the Paul of former days, of the first missionary tour, and was now anxious to repay the debt. Mnason is his name, and he came with those disciples of Cæsarea who were drawn by a grim foreboding to accompany Paul to whatever was his fate. Unwelcome—is that too strong a word? Perhaps. To the everlasting glory of those Judean Christians, so full of well-justified apprehensions, they were glad to greet Paul when they actually saw him; in conflict

with human fear, divine courage did, for the moment, gain the day. They dared to love and to receive the unpopular man. Yet his sister, if alive, and his sister's son took no recorded part in the occasion.

For the last time in Scriptural narrative, the disciples met in solemn conclave. As they vanish into the terrors of the time that was descending on them, let us bid these first comrades of ours an affectionate adieu. In the chief chair, once more, sits James, the Lord's brother, and the elders are gathered around him. Already, the assembly of the Church has become a selected body, without women; a Parliament—a Cabinet; discussing in secret the expedients whereby in church as well as state, government is most safely conducted. Already we note how the Pentecostal boldness of Peter and John had become a fear of the multitude, of public opinion,—how there was dependence on insincere artifices of statecraft, on compromise with tolerated prejudice. Multitudes even of Christians were zealous for the law—had heard that Paul neglected the ancient customs—would come together and make trouble. What was to be the remedy? Thirty years earlier those disciples would have known well enough. They would have waited for the Spirit of Power and Truth and then, cost what it might, they would have gone forth to shatter the bondage of law with the declaration of love. In Christ, they would have proclaimed the Master of Moses. As it was, they confidentially glorified God for the Gentiles—and then proposed public conditions, apologies and mitigations, for what God had wrought.

At that moment of utter provocation, not one word of impatience fell from the eager lips of Paul. Here was a man who had driven forth devils, survived earthquakes, bled under the scourge, and stood alone on Mars Hill, and they actually suggested that as a next step to the conquest of the world for Christ, he should shave his head. Nay more, four men, presumably younger than himself, were to join him in the vow. The dead hand of ritualism was to be fastened on the rising generation. The splendid comradeship with Timothy was to be exchanged for a ceremonial razor. The tonsure was to inflict age upon unspent youth. The boys were to behave like their grandfathers—the girls to be as restricted in outlook as their grandmothers. Instead of eternity—future and present as well as past—the past was to be a monopoly—enshadowing all effort, all ideals, all policy. That shaving of Paul's head was an insult to every conviction for which he had contended as apostle to the Gentiles. It branded him, the evangelist and gospeller, as an ecclesiastical convict. It was the close crop which degrades the wrong-doer. Yet he submitted. He suffered the humiliation. He allowed narrow-minded men to win the victory over his personal prestige. He became of no reputation, obedient to the Cross.

The enemies of Christ were but little deceived. Their quarrel was not with Paul's gray hair but with Paul's good heart. They knew that what he stood for was not merely a skin-deep emotion of the face, but was a principle rooted in the soul. Where the disciples were thinking externals, the enemy of mankind was striking straight at the ker-

nel of the situation. Compromise and camouflage could never disguise a man like Paul from recognition by his adversaries. In Asia, as we have seen, the Jews were powerless to resist the Gentile movement. In Jerusalem they had their revenge. The city which slew Christ was already the stronghold, the city of refuge, for every discredited prejudice the wide world over. The spectacle of Trophimus the Ephesian, obviously happy in the worship of God, yet uncircumcised and no proselyte, infuriated the Ephesian Jews, who kept the feast. The mob arose and seized, not Trophimus, but Paul,—not the emancipated slave but the emancipator—not the convert but the preacher—and a new meaning was shed on the idea of "crucifixion with Christ." It meant not only suffering with Him. It also meant suffering for others. Of all those multitudes of disciples, Paul alone was seized. Strike him down and the rest would not matter.

They thrust him out of the Temple; they shut the doors against him. Yet he was a Jew, as well as they; as strict a Jew as they. What they then shut out was not Paul, but the Christ in Paul. As they had rejected Christ in the flesh, so they now rejected Christ in the spirit. They succeeded in shutting those doors. Paul could not—did not try to force them open. From human institutions, ecclesiastical, commercial and political,—it is possible to exclude the Master and His disciples. Men have often done it and, by test acts and similar devices, they will do it again. But the Temple without Christ did not survive one generation. It was burned in the fire of retribution. It crumbled in the dust of decay. In turning out the Eternal it

became logically as transient as the men who governed it. It is reason and science that states and nations cannot survive the Spirit within them. If the spirit be of time only, that time will be the inevitable limit of the commonwealth which thus expresses itself.

The Christians, whether Jewish or Greek, were no match for the mob. They had been taught to forgive, to cultivate quietness of mind, not to resist evil against themselves, and to bear tribulation. The vocal part of democracy therefore carried the day. There was no endeavour to rescue Paul, nor would he have desired it. He was thinking, not of himself at all, but of the cause, and he realized that his own danger was Christ's opportunity. So was it when he arrived in Rome. There he detested his "chain." He was conscious the whole time that after so active a life he was "a prisoner of the Lord"—bedridden, manacled, invalided, paralyzed. But he also knew that his bonds helped the good news. Cæsar's court were genuinely interested in this remarkable prisoner and his message. There was gossip about him. People talked about the merits of the trial more freely than they would have talked about the Cause, as ordinarily advanced. What had been mere propaganda acquired a news value. The publicity, afterwards to be developed in Rome, was beginning in the Temple area of Jerusalem. Millions who had never heard about Christ or Paul or Trophimus or the Gospel discovered that strange events were happening. The Church which had become voiceless, which had ceased to matter very much, was suddenly revealed as the very keystone of the arch on which society rests.

Sometimes we are, I think, unfair to this democracy of Jerusalem. They acted badly, but they acted in no worse a manner than rioters of any other age, including our own. Every endeavour to secure equitable treatment for Trophimus has been resisted, from time to time, by democracy. Slaveholders thus attacked Whittier. Turkish Pashas and their Kurdish mercenaries thus outraged Christians. Paris thus slew the Huguenot. Lord George Gordon and his roysterers thus treated the Catholics. Not until we establish universal citizenship will every Temple find room for every Ephesian. When white man and black man and yellow man and red man kneel at one altar, then and only then let us cast stones at these angry Hebrews. As we fear intermarriage, so did they. As we anticipate an unfortunate mingling of higher with lower races, so did they. As we think proudly of the purity of our Western ideals, so did they. To us, as to them, Christ and His faithful apostles teach an ever-deepening lesson of what is meant by the brotherhood of nations. To us as to them, that lesson is a challenge, often provoking passion and arousing resistance.

The cry "Away with Him" which assailed the ears of Christ, was not uttered once only, but rings and reëchoes down the annals of history. Paul heard its ominous note. So did Savonarola. So has many an idealist when surrounded on every side by the insurgent selfishness of an irritated society. They did get rid of Paul; but God remained, the great I AM, the Presence, the Everlasting Vindicator of Right. He Who was refused as a missionary returned as a conqueror and a general. The

despised love of God—despised because it embraced Trophimus—was not so very distant after all from the inescapable wrath of God. Had the Gentiles been admitted to the Temple of Jerusalem and learnt to love its glorious mysteries, no fiery brand would have kindled the fragrant cedar and burnt to ashes the Holy of Holies.

As often happens with idealists, Paul's real record was misjudged. Because anarchy reigned they assumed that he was an anarchist. Judea was then in terror of foreign agitators, Bolshevists, immigrants from Egypt, who brought their grievances with them into the promised land, and made trouble by attacking the established constitution under which men and women prospered. Such people were always leading others into the wilderness of futile disorder, and bringing the Cause of Christ itself under suspicion. Hence the chief captain's question to Paul—his attempt to condemn the apostle by a label—to judge of his words by the language —Greek or otherwise—in which they were uttered. Paul answered in terms which, in one respect, were surprising. He did not call himself, at this moment, a Christian. He took his standard as a Jew, which was his birthright, as a Roman citizen, which was his political status. To the magistrate, that was a complete reply. It rendered unto Cæsar precisely what was Cæsar's, and no more. Paul gave unto Cæsar and High Priest not one syllable or comma that belonged to God. His conscience was his own. His devotion to the Redeemer was his own. In that hour of tumult and peril and excitement, the inner sanctuary of his reverence for Our Lord Jesus Christ was preserved inviolate.

XXXI

PAUL BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST

EVERY Christian, when on trial for the faith, stands with Paul, where first stood Christ. As Christ was bound, as Paul was bound, so must the Christian be bound, restricted, limited, in the manner of his defense. To the secular jurist, like Tertullus, weapons are available which the Christian defendant must lay aside. Sarcasm, flattery, exaggeration, the flames of rhetoric, the appeal to passion and prejudice and cupidity—all these devices of the orator are excluded from the apostolic armoury. The wrists which are chained cannot threaten; the fists which are tied cannot gesticulate; and there is no escape—no evasion—no raising of the ingenious demurrer—no opportunity for elaborate preparation. As Paul faced that multitude, he had no resources, whether of money or of intellect, except the resources already within him. He could take not one instant of thought, what he should speak—what he should write. Yet never did he, never did any man address himself more nobly to an exposition of a problem. At that crucial hour, that hour of the cross, the Spirit, though unmentioned, did not fail.

The Castle at Jerusalem had long dominated the Temple—Civil Authority was still exercised over

igion. Paul stood on the stairs by which men
:ended from the often unruly Church to the
ıally well-ordered State. With the disciplined
diery around him, and the crowd of worshippers
ging below, he might have maintained, as many
dents of public affairs have done, that there is a
ɔd deal more justice in law than in grace, in
litics than in proselytism, in parliaments than in
:lacy. No one can say truly that at that moment
ul was defending religion. He was not thinking
ɔut religion. What filled him was Christ. In
rist, the ancient faith, which seethed in disorder,
s restored to a modern dignity; over Church and
ıte alike, Paul established a new and personal
thority. He raised his hand not to strike but to
:ss. The chain clanked. The sound proved that
ile the limbs of men may be restricted and tor-
'ed, the soul of man is unconquerable. And at
: sound there fell on the multitude a great
:nce. Thus was Paul allowed a hearing which
ıtinues unto this day. There is not a country—
t a people, where you will not find hearts that be-
ne still with attention when this great man
:aks.

He could have used the Greek tongue. It was
: language he habitually employed in his corre-
ɔndence—in which, also, he had just conversed
th the captain of the guard. It was in Hebrew
ıt Jesus Himself had spoken to Paul on the road
Damascus. By a fatal outburst the trustees for
:brew interrupted him, stopped his mouth, and
m that day onwards the nations have depended
s and less on the actual words of Moses, and
ɔre and more on a translated Bible. The dialect

which cannot be made a vehicle for the liberty of mankind in Christ—for truth, for beauty, for ideals—is a dialect which must inevitably lose its grip over consciences of men. It is in the English Bible that English has triumphed. Close the English Bible and the language will degenerate,—the world-wide union of English thought and English worship will be shattered.

Where Christ had stood silent, Paul's voice rang out. It is indeed amazing—that love and confidence which led the Redeemer who spoke as none other to leave His case, as it were, for His followers to plead. *Greater things*, said He, *shall ye do, because I go to the Father.* The number of disciples won through Paul was probably far larger than the total number of Christians living when Our Lord ascended. Christ's words were wonderful, but, in all reverence, I submit that they were not more wonderful than the tribute to Christ which—considering who the speaker had been,—Paul was able to utter. For Paul's sake, Christ had, by silence, pleaded guilty of Paul's sin. For Christ's sake, Paul did, by utterance, plead happiness by Christ's salvation.

During their legal proceedings, he spoke, or tried to speak, four times. First, he addressed democracy, a plebiscite, a commune, an electorate. Next, he submitted himself to a conclave, sanhedrin, parliament, congress. Thirdly, he was brought before Festus, the bureaucrat, the justiciary, the civil service, the government machine, the department of state. Fourthly, he faced Agrippa, the king, the royal family, the dynasty. In the trial of Paul all the conceivable authorities in Church, State, and

Nation were involved. It is not possible for any form of political organization to claim that if *it* had been in force, things would have gone differently. Systems are imperfect but Justice dwells in the hearts of men. They may be many, they may be few, but there is no Justice except what springs from within them.

When Our Lord was tried, Justice was slain. But in Him, Justice rose again, and in the case of Paul, Justice merely slept. One hearing followed another without any decision being reached. Already, it had become even in Jerusalem a little more difficult to do the iniquitous thing. In Christ, and through Christ, innocence, however weak in numbers, was gaining moral strength. When Jesus was scourged, nobody protested. That was because Jesus had surrendered all political status higher than that of the humblest slave.

When that great assembly realized that the apostle was addressing them in their native Hebrew, the silence, already dramatic, deepened. Every syllable was heard and every syllable was understood. Here was exhibited the crowning privilege of a proud people hearing of Christ, in no foreign tongue, but in their own familiar accents—Luther speaking to Germany—Tyndall to England—Moody to America. It was the artisan witnessing for Christ in the workshop. It was the millionaire revealing Christ in the bank. It was the doctor bearing Christ to the clinic. It was the clerk showing Christ in the counting house. It was the Buddhist preaching Christ to Hindus; it was Booker Washington putting the Gospel to Negroes. At that moment, Paul was the last of

the seers—he was prophecy on the scaffold. They knew that he stood in direct succession to Joshua when Joshua asked their forefathers to choose whom they would serve; and to Elijah when he appealed to the God Who answers by fire. They listened, therefore, as a jury, competent to determine a suit which embraces everlasting guilt and everlasting pardon.

Paul had heard Stephen's appeal to history. At Antioch, he had himself adopted it. The appeal had failed. From argument and analogy he turned to personal experience and told how to him, as to Moses and Isaiah, had come the beatific vision. To this testimony they raised no objection. Paul was a Jew. Ananias was a Jew. If Jesus was a Messiah for the Jews alone, they would accept Him—why not? He would be one more of their privileges. Yet another illustrious figure would adorn their Pantheon. Jesus as the Saviour of a race, as the prerogative of a class, awakes no opposition. In Parliaments, they praise this "Christ." In Courts, they honour "Him." But let the Gentiles be mentioned—the outsiders—the natives—and the mere suggestion that Our Lord belongs equally to them, is yearning to help them, and is sending to them His apostles, arouses a profound disgust. Paul's crime lay in this—he insisted that unless Christ be Universal, there is no Christ at all.

Gentiles!—unto that word they gave audience. Then, at the word, they lifted up their voices and shouted—*Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live.* The word *Gentile* was enough; yet what a word it was. Think of the

innumerable homes, in every climate, where obscure and nameless families struggle bravely through life,—little children learning to walk and talk—young men and maidens renewing romance—sickness and accident descending on the strong—and all ushered finally into a comprehensive yet mysterious tomb. Think how the merchant and the trader have robbed the Gentiles, polluted the customs of the Gentiles with lust and opium and alcohol, despised the manhood and womanhood of the Gentiles, menaced the very existence of the Gentiles with bayonet and bullet and brigandage! To suggest that Christ is to be carried to the Gentiles, that the best in art, in literature, in justice, in love may be theirs as well as ours, is to proclaim a revolution. If we do not perceive this, the Jews did. They filled the heavens with one last futile roar of protest—anything, thought they, to stop the discussion. Put any rubbish in the papers—prize-fights, puppet-shows, or poetry—except this one word—*the Gentiles*. Throw dust into the people's eyes—any kind of dust—misrepresentation, calumny, false political issues—rather than let people realize the actual needs and wrongs and breathing life of the Gentiles. For that word, Gentile, is international. It means the coördination of races and classes in one common demand for life and happiness. It is formidable. It sweeps away the local temple. It obliterates the castle. It clamours for something which statesmen by politics cannot supply. It will have a rule which statesmen reject. Once utter the word Gentile and your world rocks and reels until you found it afresh upon Christ.

The chief captain standing there by Paul is also a monumental figure. He represents the blindness of martial law—the very essence of Prussianism. He watched the tumult but could not understand it, and, since any man in any regiment who fails to keep step should be severely disciplined, he assumed that Paul, the individual, was guilty. He was ready to govern the Jew, but would have been insulted at the idea of learning the Jew's language, studying the Jew's religion, getting behind the Jew's thought. His plan was simply to scourge Paul, to shoot every tenth rioter, to terrorize unrest into submission. His soldiers were actually binding the apostle without the chief captain realizing for a moment that his prisoner had been fighting the battle of the whole Roman Empire. What was that empire but an organization of Gentiles? To bring the Best to all peoples was to secure the empire for all time to come.

Christians have often argued the question whether Paul was right or wrong when at this terrible moment he claimed his rights as a Roman citizen. It was, to be frank, a privilege, either of wealth, as in the chief captain's case, or of birth, as in the case of the apostle. It meant at that time a different rule for the aristocrat and plutocrat than for the plebeian. It implied an easier code of justice for the big man than for the small man—first class and second class and third class imprisonment according to your social position. Paul took the view that it is policy, not to sacrifice the rights of the few where in themselves they are reasonable, but to extend these rights to the many. The same principle by which he defended the Gentiles led him

to assert his own citizenship—namely, the dignity of man. At Philippi he had submitted without a murmur to the rod because at Philippi his companion was Silas who did not enjoy his civic immunity. In Jerusalem he stood alone. No Silas was involved in his peril, and having more than once suffered willingly the pain and humiliation of a flogging, he did indeed demonstrate his readiness so to do, by showing how simply he could have escaped. The mere fact that Armenians are murdered and that there have been rubber horrors on the Congo does not invalidate British and American citizenship to which countless coloured persons have been admitted.

Moreover, of all reformers, Christ was perhaps the only one Who, being Himself utterly poor, could be completely fair to the utterly rich. As He did not ask Paul to surrender his citizenship, so He does not say to kings, abdicate; or to directors, resign; or to dukes, deny your ancestry. He claims the sceptre, He initials the ledger, He seals the title deed. Life is not levelled; it is consecrated. To all of us there is a position, at our office, in our kitchen, or club, or plant or mine or factory or farm, which is to us what citizenship was to Paul, provided that we use it frankly, as for Him.

Knowing not the fear of God, the chief captain was at least moved by the fear of Rome. Paul was not scourged. Next day, unhurt, he was brought before the Sanhedrin. The crime of the State was not to begin until the crime of the Church was complete. In that council, you had the selected intelligence of a free people—the men who had enjoyed the advantages of birth and education—the

bench of bishops, sitting as spiritual peers,—the cardinal princes of the faith—the university constituency. Yet at Paul's first innocent sentence, ecclesiastical and academic rancour smote him on the mouth. It was a blow delivered by express order of Ananias, the high priest. Swayed by gusts of passion, the multitude had been none the less a far more merciful and reliable court of justice. At least, the common people had given Paul a hearing; Ananias was the first of the holy inquisitors, the earliest judge of a star chamber, the censor of free speech, the instigator of secret trials. Learning and scholarship have a value but in themselves they are useless as guarantees of equity. It was such study that trained Torquemada and made modern Germany. Unconsecrated knowledge, like any other form of unconsecrated power, is bound to be abused.

The long history of the Jews as a nation was approaching its tragic termination. The last great scene in those wonderful annals was this appearance of Paul, the Pharisee and the apostle, the Israelite and the disciple, before the Sanhedrin. From his youth onwards, the majestic surroundings of the Temple had been familiar to him. His judges had been personal friends and when he spoke to them, the intimate word "brethren" leapt to his lips. Luke, the physician, was quick to note the curious contraction of his brows as, without spectacles, he endeavoured to recognize the priests and rabbis around him. Even the high priest in his robes was beyond the range of his blurred vision and it must have seemed to the apostle as if the *régime* which began with Abraham was already

dim and indistinct to eyes dazzled by the new revelation of God.

Between the trials of Jesus and Paul there are many parallels. In both cases the Jews prosecuted and the Romans punished. It was wrong religion that led astray right politics. If the cases resemble one another, it is because there was no offense against man which was not also an offense against God. Yet a clear distinction may be drawn between the two prisoners at the bar—between the Christ Who was scourged and the Christian who claimed immunity—between Him Who when struck with the hand calmly reasoned, and His servant who indignantly denounced—between the silent Nazarene, and the subtle Pharisee who raised a diversion over the resurrection. Measured by any standard save Our Lord's, the behaviour of Paul was sublime. But compared with the Example, the copy was imperfect. It could not have been otherwise.

To Jesus, regarding human life from the immeasurable altitude of divinity, priests and governors and kings were merely men, to be treated with respect only because respect is due to all when countenances are moulded in the image of God. To Paul, who approached the institution of society, as it were, from the ground floor, Ananias the priest, Festus the governor and Agrippa the king were dignitaries, of whom no evil must be spoken. Stripped of his robes, the high priest might resemble a whited wall. But officially arrayed, the man's person was sacred. No prisoner, however unjustly charged, must rail against a judge in ermine.

At this decisive moment, Paul's attitude was thus

essentially conservative. He stood for divine right, for the law, for texts of Scripture, which he quoted in every sentence,—and he did not mention the Gentiles. He made a last attempt as a Pharisee and a son of Pharisees to rally Pharisees to that truth of their own resurrection which was fulfilled alone in Christ. And it almost seemed as if he would succeed. Against the modern materialism of the Sadducees the Pharisees rose in wrath. A roar of judgment filled the air. If theological controversy could have saved the nation, here it was in all vehemence. As champion of the orthodox, Paul became at once a hero. "*We find no evil in him,*" they cried, "*if angel or spirit hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.*" For an instant the situation looked hopeful, but it came a day too late. The Pharisees were like men of privilege in every century, who make tardy concessions when the revolt is out of hand.

For as the quarrel developed, suddenly Rome stepped in, removed the prisoner, and the House of Israel became, as it were, dramatically empty. With the rescue of Paul, not one further syllable is wasted upon Ananias the high priest and the fiercely contending factions. That lurid disorder of minds which refused the mastership of Our Lord vanishes, like a shifting scene, into outer darkness. It was the beginning of the destruction of Jerusalem. Here were the feuds which wrecked the Holy City. The flames that consumed the Temple were kindled first in the hearts of the priests who served, the people who worshipped and the rabbis who prayed and preached.

XXXII

THE STRUGGLE WITH FELIX

THESE are days when crowns and thrones do perish—empires wax and wane. Much has been said against religion, but statesmen are also on trial. When the Jews prosecuted Paul, they were wrong. But when Rome rescued him, Rome became responsible for seeing that justice was done. For the person of Paul, as for the person of Christ, the civil and military power was then trustee. Politicians do not escape judgment by sneering at parsons. It may be true that the parson has the pulpit, but presidents and kings and prime ministers have the treasury and the army and the navy and the police and the post-office. If they fail to do right, history will not pardon. They also have no excuse.

On what did the success of the Roman Empire depend? On the Emperor? He is not mentioned. If I say that the Emperor was Nero and that he happened about that time to be murdering his degenerate mother Agrippina, it is because I have looked him up in books, unread compared with the Bible. What held the empire together was the conduct of the average official, of Felix and Festus, of the chief captain, Claudius Lysias, and his centurions. In their behaviour we see the good and

the bad in bureaucracy. They kept order. Their discipline was strict. As the case of Felix shows, however, they were open to bribery. They obeyed the more obvious rules—respecting Paul as a citizen and defending him against riot or secret assassination. Whatever equity can be instilled into men's minds by a code, these men practiced but they failed at the crucial point. Their sense of justice was on paper, not in the heart. They were loyal to Rome, but with a string tied to self. They wanted right, but they wanted it with profit and without risk. They kept their consciences bandaged in red tape. And the State suffered. No man can truly serve an earthly monarch until his will has been surrendered to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Take Claudius Lysias' first. His official testimony is that "nothing worthy of death or of bonds was laid to the charge of Paul." In other words, he quashed the indictment. He could find no case to submit to the jury. This decision should have been followed at once by Paul's release. If the simple thing had been done, the State would have been saved years of trouble and great expense. But Claudius Lysias substituted policy for equity. It meant that two hundred foot soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen had to be set aside as a truly royal escort for Paul, a prisoner. It meant that Tertullus, the leading advocate, earned a handsome fee. It meant that as the case was handed from Lysias to Felix and from Felix to Festus and from Festus to Agrippa, it created a political problem between Jew and Roman of ever-increasing perplexity. Trial by law and by equity

was gradually superseded by trial at the bar of public opinion. And finally the Emperor himself was involved. All this would have been avoided if at the outset the right step had been taken.

Claudius Lysias doubtless imagined that his letter to the most excellent governor Felix was a model of literary officialdom. It was, of course, the opening document in Paul's criminal dossier. Luke was so impressed by it that he kept a careful copy and made it the basis on which he drafted his two dedications—first of the Gospel and then of the Acts—to "the most excellent Theophilus." He liked this ancient and decorous jargon of courts and parliaments and chancellories. But with the passage of time, it has become mere pompous folly, —as fusty as the ermine and velvet of Potsdam or Vienna—and Luke's admiration has turned to an irony of which he never dreamt. About the breakdown of modern civilization there is no mystery. It happened here,—the entire drama,—for our warning and instruction.

With the State hesitating over a plain issue, dark forces gathered underground. The forty men who bound themselves neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul were like the Black Hand in Russia or the military clique in Germany,—the Ultramontanes—the political Jesuits—the Die Hards—the counter-revolutionaries—who as legitimists are ever wanting to bring back the Bourbons and make a new monarch out of some headless mummy. Against Christ also there were similar conspiracies. Of this plot the authorities disapproved. But they were bound to recognize its high ecclesiastical patronage. There were high priests and prelates,

who without perceptible sacrifice of sleep or diet, knew all about it and they were to assist by asking a further audience of Paul. The old men instigated —the young men bore the brunt. It was pitiable indeed that such enthusiasm should be perverted by cunning statecraft to such despicable ends. The danger of neglecting or repudiating the Christ has always been this uncertainty as to who or what will take His place. The choice is not between His Gospel and nothing—not between His Gospel and philosophy or art or pleasure. It is Christ or Barabbas—gospel or murder—salvation or the stiletto.

At this point we hear for the first and last time of Paul's sister and that sister's son. It may be that the severity of the apostle's judgment against John Mark, sister's son to Barnabas, was accentuated by the estrangement in his own family which was so complete that hospitality itself was out of the question. The guests of Mnason from Cyprus, Paul and Luke hardly knew the name of the youth—the apostle's nephew—who, by an act of splendid gallantry, defeated the conspirators. He was a Jew. By descent, he was like Paul a Pharisee. He was at that very age when Paul had held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen. The plotters were among his associates. Disliking Paul, as they did, he heard with surprise and horror the gradual yet rapid disclosure of their cruel intentions. In his revulsion of feeling, we note the reaction against violence which always follows even the most popular crimes. This young man declared the verdict of the future.

At dead of night, he made his way to that dreaded castle. Of his own will, no man had ever

sought the shadow of those pitiless buttresses and bastions. The compulsion of duty made this young man a Christian. He must simply "do his bit." They took him to Paul and he found Paul awake. In the manner of the apostle, there was a wonderful confidence of which the secret was not then disclosed. He did not praise the young man. He did not talk religion to him. He handed him over to the centurion, to the chief captain,—that is, to greater peril, to more dangerous service. Without one needless word, the young man went where he was told to go. The plot was exposed and Paul was sent for safety to Cæsarea.

He tried to do his duty—that is the only epitaph of this nameless youth who was left in Jerusalem to face the wrath of the conspirators whose felonious intent he had foiled. In his straight, sincere mind, there was no room for guilty information—for secrets withheld from those who had a right to know —he acknowledged that thought itself belongs to God. As he walked, bravely yet modestly through the corridors of the castle, passed the block black with blood, the dripping scourges, the ominous axe, he was marching really straight across the page of ineradicable history.

A city is drifting near destruction when for any reason life is not safe within its boundaries. Paul removed to Cæsarea meant the end of Jerusalem as a capital. From turbulence to rebellion is but a step and what Jerusalem rebelled against was order, justice, mercy. It was not the vice but the virtue of Rome that Mount Zion resisted. The wars of liberation, which so soon broke out, were provoked by the depravity, not the nobleness of the

small nation which revolted. The self-determination was a determination to selfishness—to passion, pride and malice. The patriotism was the last refuge of scoundrels, and it was shattered, unregretted.

There are two complaints which ordinary folk make about lawyers. First, they plead for a fee, which puts the poor man at a disadvantage. Secondly, they speak from a brief in which there may be written down many statements that must, if uttered, pervert justice. An instance in point was Tertullus, the orator, who, in the hearing before Felix at Cæsarea, prosecuted Paul. As an advocate, he was thoroughly dishonest. His only idea was to win his case. He wanted victory because victory in the court meant professional success. His was the usual standard of the pagan bar. He was neither better nor worse than the rest. He was wholly unconscious that his methods were undermining respect for jurisprudence and preparing the ground for that anarchy which ultimately overwhelmed the Roman Empire.

His compliments to Felix were in themselves an attempt to divert the issue from fact to emotion, from truth to flattery, and to give Felix his due, he seems to have betrayed a touch of impatience at the adulation. The accusation against Paul was not that he was a pestilent fellow of bad character, for he was known to be a strict Pharisee. He had not stirred up riots all over the world but had usually left cities behind where owing to the Jews riots had occurred. He had not profaned the Temple but had sought to win for the Temple the love and admiration of the Gentiles. He was certainly a

ringleader of a sect of the Nazarenes,—but why not have said simply, a disciple of Jesus? Why use the terms which introduce prejudice? It was the usual lawyer's trick. Study the prejudice of the juryman and play on it.

I do not deny that there were, *prima facie*, grounds for an indictment against Paul. Any one involved in civil disturbance may have to answer for his conduct. Nor am I suggesting that the Jews, as party to the suit, had no right to employ legal assistance. But what vitiated the proceedings was the artifice whereby Tertullus evaded the points in question, which I take to be three—first, did Paul in fact introduce Trophimus the Ephesian into the Temple? Secondly, was this act, if committed, illegal? And, thirdly, if the act were committed and if it were illegal, what was a suitable and adequate punishment for an offense, apparently so trivial? The trespass had injured nobody. The Temple was entirely undamaged. A simple fine or undertaking not to repeat the indiscretion would surely have met the situation.

Like Christ, Paul had no counsel to defend him. But his rejoinder is everything that legal advocacy should be. He frankly admitted that, according to the Jews, he was a heretic. Without a moment of hesitation, he stated precisely where the difference of opinion lay. If heresy be a civil crime, Paul pleaded guilty. In the Middle Ages few tribunals would have acquitted him. But he defined heresy in his own way. It was not the negation of law and prophets. It was the right to interpret them. It was not a denial of Messianic hope. It was the declaration that Christ is risen. If Christ be risen,

He speaks, He says new things, He does fresh deeds. An active Christ was Paul's only misdemeanour.

Felix listened and was impressed. As Paul spoke, it seems as if Ananias the high priest and Tertullus the orator and the entire mob of angry ecclesiastics recede into the background, and when he finished, they have disappeared forever—written clean off the slate. We are left with Paul's spiritual authority, calm and confident, while the civil authority trembles. Confronted by Christ, first in His own Person, and secondly in the person of His apostle, the Roman power hesitates, is attracted, becomes timid, then selfish, and finally cruel. I can imagine no spectacle more astonishing to the witness than the movement of this mighty administrative machine along the line of destiny towards the junction, where men's motives switch the points to right or left.

First, you have the law's delays. Claudius Lysias must be summoned and, for some reason, Claudius Lysias was not easily available. Then the case began to be fashionable. Drusilla, the wife of Felix, of the house of Herod, took an interest in it, and, as a Jewess, enjoyed the apostle's eloquence. Poor Drusilla—destined to die by fire in Pompeii! People crowded into the court. Ladies begged the ushers for tickets. Paul gained many a rich and powerful friend. He was permitted to live on parole. Every one who was anybody interviewed him. Yet his popularity was cruel. Not one of his admirers sought his release.

Felix, whose very name means fortunate, trembled. Here was this strange prisoner, charged

with fomenting anarchy, yet reasoning in cold Roman logic about justice and the restraint of self and the judgment to come. The man who was in the right, though standing in the dock, put the governor on his throne in the wrong. Suddenly, Felix discovered that he and all he represented were now on trial for life. His wealth, his country's commercial system, its armies and navies, its diplomacy —all were put to the test of a law, administered by an Eternal Justice.

Felix was a typical politician. He regarded Paul as a deputation. He agreed that many matters ought to be put straight. A case had been made out. No exception could be taken to the way that Paul had put the facts. To anybody acquainted with parliaments, how familiar it all sounds! But, of course,—thought Felix—care must be exercised in applying remedies. It is so easy to do more harm than good. Nothing could be managed that session. The next session might be more convenient. The bill must stand over. The house must adjourn. The Jewish vote must not be antagonized. Last but not least, no injustice must be done to men's pockets. It was the custom for even innocent people to pay the usual something through the usual channels for the usual acquittal. Why should Paul be an exception? If he were liberated, *gratis*, the entire system of bribery and corruption, on which rested Drusilla's social prestige—her jewels and dresses, her slaves and her perfumes—broke down. Until the usual graft were paid, there would be inevitably some technical objection to Paul regaining freedom.

Then suddenly Felix was superseded by Festus.

The crisis came. His wife had not trembled. She was the one who had the nerve. Her friends persuaded her to use her influence, and to please the Jews Paul's privileges were terminated, his parole was cancelled, the chain was restored, he was left bound. To gain his little fragment of the world, so pitifully small and transitory, Felix lost his soul. The man who might have saved the empire for truth and the right, returned to the crowd undistinguishable save by the bitter memory of the chance that would never come again.

What was the secret of Paul's wonderful dignity —his incomparable nerve? He was a man of vision. Less fortunate than St. John the Divine he was often quite unable to describe what he saw even when he entered the seventh heaven. But however dark the night, he was never lonely. He was always sure of a visitor. In his dungeon, as on board his ship, the Lord Himself stood by him and bade him be of good cheer. By temperament no man has ever been more excitable, yet his serenity was what he himself called the peace of God that passeth all understanding.

XXXIII

THE FIGHT FOR FESTUS

WHEN great crimes are committed by the State, it is sometimes possible for some of us to escape the blame by arguing that our party was not in office—that it was the other fellow who did it. Felix was an individual. But when Felix and Lysias and Festus are joined in one policy, you cannot any longer attribute what happened to the accident of an individual,—the very heart of society is arraigned.

Of all the hard fates which tyranny inflicts, none equals in intensity of suffering the abandonment of an untried prisoner to years of oblivion. To be misjudged is cruel, but to be forgotten is cruelty with insult. Festus landed at Cæsarea, swept on to Jerusalem, with not one thought of Paul, chafing under his chain. There were no riots to revive the *cause célèbre.* No appeal was made by any of Paul's friends. If only the Jews had let ill alone, Paul might have languished for the rest of his life, unnoticed by the historian.

But it is as a rule, sometimes overlooked, that whenever wrong is done by any one however powerful to any one however humble, a ghost walks abroad uneasily and will not be allayed. The Jews were aware that Paul still thought those thoughts

which they hated, that his tongue was not yet silenced, that his cause still prospered. In this affair, there was something which could not be crushed, at any rate in Cæsarea, and they begged Festus to bring Paul back to Jerusalem, along a road which they would hallow by assassination. That the murderous intent now included the whole Sanhedrin is clear from the narrative. The evil had spread from few to many and no longer feared the light. From an unavowed artifice the dagger had become a recognized instrument of State.

The difference between Festus and the Jews was perhaps important. They had slain Christ; Festus hardly knew who Christ was. If he was shocked by the attitude of the Jews, and resisted it, the reason was that a heart which is merely ignorant of the Saviour is less hard than the heart which has repudiated Him. A man who looks Christ in the face and then turns his back is afterwards capable of any brutality. Festus told the Jews bluntly that Paul would remain out of their clutches, in Cæsarea. Jerusalem, as mistress of righteousness, was deposed.

To Cæsarea, then, the Jews made their journey. Their numbers were formidable. Their clamour was vehement. To reason with them had long been impossible. With the sin of the partisan,—the man who puts party first and Christ second—they were consumed. Nothing mattered except their passion. The fact that by their madness they were bringing their country into danger entirely escaped their minds. In the behaviour of these men there is apparent the fearful morass which awaits society when society will not bear the rule

of Him Who is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

On a great occasion Jesus of Nazareth, though destined to be Lord of all men, laid aside His garments and washed His disciples' feet, saying unto them, "*One is your Master even Christ and all ye are brethren.*" By these words He claimed that no power is rightly to be exercised, save by His authority; any other use of force is usurpation. In Festus, the mastery over other men, uninfluenced by the one Master, had developed an infamous cunning. As an official, he ignored whatever had been his conscience and was quite ready to trick a poor and lonely prisoner out of a fair trial by proposing blandly that his case should be heard before a packed court and a hanging jury. The sinister suavity of his demeanour only made his real motive the more odious. Paul was to be done to death either by a judicial murder or by a tolerated assassination. In the one event, the crime would be camouflaged by the forms of justice. In the other, it would be a regrettable but unforeseen accident. However it happened, Festus would wash his hands, as Pilate did, of the whole affair, arguing if pressed some political necessity or reason of state.

Already Paul had been under arrest for two whole years. When he reached Rome, his cause dragged on for another two years before he was granted a first hearing. The entire proceedings must have occupied as long a period as the trial of Warren Hastings. But with this difference. The prosecution of the Indian consul opened brilliantly but interest soon declined, whereas with every day of Paul's progress to a martyr's death attention

deepened. From the Sanhedrin to Felix, from Felix to Festus, from Festus to Agrippa, from Agrippa to Nero, the heroism of this man drew him in a triumphal parade. Each scene transcends all that preceded it. And inevitably. The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

In the palace of Cæsarea, hunted by the malice of Jews on the one hand and by the merciless statecraft of Roman politicians on the other, his life and limb in deadly peril, his reputation wickedly slandered and his career wantonly wrecked, this solitary missioner, stricken in health, his face furrowed with age, his hands rough with toil, his wrists sore with fetters, stood forth, once for all time, with a courage incomparable. In the book which destroyed the Bourbons, Rousseau said that man is born free but is everywhere in chains. Paul was that man in chains, twice born free. By a sudden and supreme inspiration, he challenged his fate. He claimed his social contract. Here was no local issue. Injustice to one man, however humble, poor and friendless, is an offense against all mankind. No one nation can determine such an issue. No one religion can pronounce judgment upon it. Every faith, every people, every class and every colour must be united on that jury. Cæsar—the international authority—is the one judge. At Cæsar's judgment seat, where leagues of nations gather, appears for the future any man who is wronged. *I appeal unto Caesar,* cried Paul. *We appeal unto Humanity*—echo the voices of chattel slaves and wage slaves and drug slaves and drink slaves—of serfs on the feudal estate, of the ex-

ploited native, the misrepresented idealist. *Humanity!—Caesar!—unto Caesar shalt thou go!* So answered Festus—so was Paul sent. And with what result? The verdict of *Humanity*—what was it? Was Humanity humane? Was Humanity merciful? Are Leagues of Nations to be engines of despotism, holy alliances against liberty, or are they to be the vindicators of social justice? The Humanity of Rome cut off Paul's head and crucified Peter.

Humanity—what a noble word it sometimes seems to be! What sympathy from one to another! What a fellow-feeling to pass like a thrill through the ranks! From this narrative of Paul's appeal unto Cæsar, the stern truth must be drawn that Humanity—the impulse whether of mob or Emperor—is to be judged precisely according to the obedience which Humanity renders unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the book which led up to the French Revolution,—the *Social Contract*—Jean Jaques Rousseau declared that man is born free but is everywhere in chains. It was a sentence that shattered a dynasty; Paul before Festus was this enchained Manhood. Yet in his very appeal unto Cæsar he sealed his own fate. *If this man had not appealed unto Caesar*, said Agrippa and Festus, the one to another, *he might have been set at liberty.* I do not suggest that the appeal was wrong; it was obvious. But it was Paul's own act and human acts often forestall divine miracles.

XXXIV

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

THE appearance of Paul the apostle before King Agrippa has been regarded always as the culminating scene in his life as accurately known to us. Strictly speaking, the occasion was an interlude in the main drama which began at Jerusalem, the city of religion, and could only end at Rome, the city of force. The hearing of Paul's cause by Agrippa is thus precisely parallel to the so-called trial of Jesus by Herod Antipas which in no way advanced the verdict that was to decide His fate. In both cases, the real political power thought that royalty might find a safe amusement in the fettered gospel.

Here was exhibited for all men to see the contrast between the glory of an earthly throne and the spiritual splendours of God's kingdom in the heart of man. Not one of those monarchies which have vanished from the map of Europe displayed a more brilliant aspect than that great pomp which surrounded Agrippa, the last king to reign in the Holy Land. The chief captains were ranged around him. High officials thronged his sacred person. And at his side sat Berenice, with her gorgeous bevy of ladies in waiting. It was the spectacle that has dazzled nations for centuries—

the utmost glitter on the surface—whatever may lurk beneath.

If John the Baptist had confronted King Agrippa, what indictment he would have thundered into the air! Your father, he would have said, murdered a holy man called James, merely to please the mob, and claiming to be God, died miserably of worms. Your aunt, Herodias, wickedly married her uncle, Philip, and then, as if that was not enough, transferred her guilty affection to his brother, Antipas, ruining his legal marriage with the daughter of Aretas, King of Damascus, and so provoking a bloody war in which thousands of innocent people were killed, injured, or plundered. Your cousin Salome degraded the art of dancing by her lascivious excesses whereby she secured the murder of the one prophet who stood firmly for decency in public life, and she married her uncle. That woman, Berenice, sitting beside you, with dark rumours surrounding her character and yours, is actually your sister and your influence over her is such that she will become the degraded courtesan of two succeeding Roman Emperors—Vespasian and Titus. You have another sister, Drusilla, a "Jewess," married to Felix, a pagan, who when his soul lay in the balance between God and nothing, persuaded him to leave Paul still bound and a prisoner. The founder of your dynasty was husband of ten wives. He brutally murdered Mariamne, your great-grandmother. At his hand, your grandfather, Aristobulus, was done to death while his brother Alexander and his half-brother, Antipater, shared the same grim fate. Your great-granduncle, also called Aristobulus, was high priest in the Temple of Jehovah,

but even he was slain by the monster of iniquity whose sceptre you wield. Aristobulus and Mariamne had an aged grandfather, Hyrcanus, of priestly status, but he also perished. Your ancestor, Herod, massacred the entire Sanhedrin save two and slaughtered the babes of Bethlehem, save One. And here are you, Agrippa the King, with the curses of millions upon your crown and your conscience, daring the wrath of God and man by presuming a judgment on a Christian missionary, the latchet of whose shoes your perfumed and vicious fingers are unworthy to unloose! So would have spoken the ancient prophets of Sinaitic justice.

In the narrative of Luke there is no hint of the scandalous depravity which was so soon to overwhelm the Asmonean Dynasty in an ignominious doom. The pageantry of that rotten and reeking court is accepted and even admired at its nominal value. It is only by a chance remark that we learn of the heartless contempt which kept Paul bound with chains, even when he was making his defense. Many a satirist of that cynical era was exposing the scandals of the Herodian family, but Paul's was another task. He did not summon the volcano which was so soon to overwhelm Pompeii and in Pompeii the wretched princess Drusilla. Any journalist who knows his profession can thus expose the seamy side of high society. Paul, as apostle, presented the Alternative. He would overcome evil with good. He spoke to Agrippa with a gentle affection which avoided every suggestion of a taunt.

This restraint is the more astonishing because, throughout Paul's career, he cultivated the historic

sense of which he was never more conscious than on this day when he counted himself happy because King Agrippa was an expert in all questions and customs concerning the Jews. For here, at Cæsarea, was enacted the closing scene of that hereditary feud which broke the hearts of Isaac and Rebecca, who saw the bitter quarrel between Jacob and Esau; Israel and Edom; Jesus and Herod—the Spiritual and the Material in human life—God and Mammon. Paul was a Pharisee, appearing before a Herodian tribunal. It was as if a French priest were to answer for himself before a Lutheran and a Prussian. No one who has read the epistle to the Galatians with its elaborate references to Sarah and Hagar—Isaac and Ishmael,—can doubt what Paul's personal sentiments must have been towards Agrippa. But it was his hope that all men would be one in Christ Jesus. He would know neither barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free. He would address Agrippa as he had addressed his own people, giving to each exactly the same testimony.

For a long life of varied experience had convinced Paul that for men of all types, rich and poor, respectable and immoral, the test is what do they think of Christ. To reveal the Christ to Agrippa and to Berenice, his unhappy accomplice, was Paul's only aim. How to put such a case, in circumstances so unusual, would have been a perplexing problem, if Paul had not followed the wise rule of trying to lead others along the selfsame path which he himself had trod. In all effective preaching there must be this background of personal knowledge—not so much an argument as a witness —a record of vision—of things seen with the eye

and heard by the ear. To that strange company Paul's tale of glorious adventure sounded like the story of some traveller who had discovered another continent. When he talked about repentance, it seemed as if the minds of his audience were indeed changed. The throne of Jerusalem, which Agrippa was ascending, and all the purple of that panoply which hung around him, insecurely held by a shadowed network of intrigue, faded into the background when they saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining around Paul and his companions. The idea that people might be turned from the power of Satan unto God, that their eyes might be opened, and that their inheritance might be richer than a king's, came like compelling music from a harp unseen. Amid dead silence, Paul stretched forth his hand in invitation, and in tones, which thrill us to this day, continued, *Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.* How he went on his journeys, preaching to small and great, and always putting the small first because they were many while the great were few—he told it all, and no one interrupted until that fatal word—*Gentiles.* And then the interruption came from a Gentile himself. *Paul,* cried Festus, *thou art beside thyself, much learning hath made thee mad.* How ridiculous this notion that common folk, rushing hither and thither on the business of what they call life, would worry for five minutes over the resurrection! It was mere pedantry, dogma, creed, theory, imagination, a delusion, monomania; in a word, the fellow was insane—outside the range of practical politics.

The interruption of Festus thus differed widely

from the clamour of the Jews. They detested the Christian Cause because they thought that it might become a Gentile affair. But Festus scoffed because he was a Gentile and knew how few of his kind would submit themselves to the authority of a risen Redeemer. And Festus has been proved right. To this day, Christ has only won a small minority of mankind. Not one-third of the human race are yet called Christian. Of that third, a mere fraction observe the essentials of the faith. But while the calculations of Festus could not be gainsaid by any man of the world, Paul was able on his side to maintain that he spoke the words of *truth and soberness.* For Agrippa was intensely listening. While Festus thought only of the multitude, the big battalions, the general trend of events, Agrippa knew better. And so did Paul remind him. *In very truth,* as the apostle declared, *this thing was not done in a corner.* The Herodians knew well enough all about King Aretas of Damascus—how his governor had tried to seize Paul. They remembered the stern witness of the Baptist, the awful silence of the Saviour, and the grave logic of Paul as he reasoned before Felix and Drusilla of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come. And they realized clearly enough that here was a conflict not for institutions and majorities but for the soul.

For in this fated family of Herod there was a curious and haunting perception of spiritual destiny. In the hinterland of their lives there lurked an uneasy conscience across which flitted ghosts of the goodness they had flouted. They liked to build the Temple—to enrich the Church—to appoint the bishops and priests—to attend the services. But

they also patronized the race-course, the fashionable banquets, the gladiatorial games. They were luxurious and extravagant without being sceptical. Like the devils, they believed the prophets and they trembled. Of this breed was Lorenzo the Magnificent—Louis the Fourteenth—Henry the Eighth—and some multi-millionaires who live as monarchs. *In some ways,* said Agrippa, *thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*

It was what wealth and power said to Wesley and Moody. It was what birth and fashion said to Ruskin and Tolstoy. We like the magic and the beauty of ideals. But of this Herod, be it remembered that he still sat on his throne and Berenice sat at his side.

Agrippa was half persuaded to be a Christian, but all that pomp and circumstance did not persuade Paul, even one inch, that he would be happier as a king. His rejoinder made that plain. *I would to God,* he said, *that not only thou but also all that hear me this day were both almost and altogether such as I am —except these bonds.* We can see the hand outstretched in invitation. We can hear the sound of the links as they clinked with the man's every movement. And we can weigh up his appeal in its deep significance—redemption even for despots and tyrants but redemption for them on terms of accurate equality with all whom they have misgoverned. The kings may be saved, but the thrones must be levelled.

Except these bonds! And they did not remove them. There was about Paul a delicate and sensible courtesy that still captivates those who study his conduct—a rich vein of humour, springing from

inward happiness—a cheery sportsmanship which enlivened the saddest atmosphere. Yet his very badinage was inspired. As a disciple of Christ, he demanded the same liberty to do good which the devil has to do evil. He did not hold the view that all the rights should be on the side of wrong and all the wrongs on the side of right. He wanted men to be in bondage to no one save Our Lord Himself.

Not one further word was uttered on either side. For it was evident to Agrippa, that, as king, he was part of a system. Suddenly, we are again conscious, as we read the narrative, of Festus the governor, of the chief captains and officials, and—most pathetic of all—of Berenice. For an instant, her fate had hung in the balance. No woman in her position cares to see her king moody and remorseful. However, the peril soon passed. Herod rose. So did Festus the governor and the courtiers. They formed the usual procession and in that procession Berenice retained her usual place. Solemnly these majestic personages paced the hall, till like shadows they vanished. It was a mirthless ceremonial—a joyless pageant. Slow and solemn were their footsteps as they departed; they had touched life and joy and peace, but they preferred death. And theirs was the etiquette of a funeral—the gravity and the mournful demeanour with which all men descend to the tomb that awaits them. Of that whole proud company, Paul alone now matters.

XXXV

THE VOYAGE

IN reading Luke's vivacious account of Paul's adventures on his voyage to Italy, what I like especially is the fact that this apostle, with the care of all the Churches on his shoulders, and his mind cram full of ecclesiastical problems, was such an excellent fellow, as we say "to go tiger hunting with." Those were days when ships were not very comfortable and these, in which Paul sailed, were convict ships, filled with wretched prisoners, torn from friends and home, and with the soldiers who guarded them. Paul himself had every reason to feel lonely. His sister at Jerusalem had not troubled to bid him good-bye. The saints in that city did not gather for a farewell on the quay. Only Luke was with him and Aristarchus, for whom, at Ephesus, the apostle in the tumult had risked his life. It was, indeed, a forlorn little company.

Yet within twenty-four hours, Paul's cheery enjoyment of foreign travel, his ready adaptability to unpleasant circumstances, had won the affection of Julius the centurion in charge, an officer of Augustus' band, or as we should put it of the Grenadier or Coldstream Guards. He did not hesitate to restore the apostle's parole and, at Sidon, Paul visited the Christians, so refreshing himself. He did not trouble to preach or to expound. It was just a friendly

call in which he allowed his own happiness to tell its tale, and with the zest of a schoolboy, on his first trip to a great city, the apostle resumed his voyage.

With Luke, he discussed the weather and the day's run, and what the wind would be. They had hoped to coast along Asia Minor,—possibly to touch at Tarsus—but they were driven south and passed close to Cyprus, finally landing at Myra, a city of Lycia. This seaport is only mentioned in this one verse of the Bible, and I do not know that any soul has been saved because Paul was interested in Myra. But even Myra has fulfilled her destiny if she teaches us that great and holy men need not live aloof from the common affairs of human existence—that they are capable of customary small talk—and keenly enjoy sightseeing.

At Myra, they changed cabins—taking berths in a new ocean liner. Like true tourists, they asked all about both these vessels. The first came from Adramyttium, whither doubtless she was returning, and as Adramyttium lies near the mouth of the Dardanelles, it is no wonder that the centurion who was bound for Rome not the Ægean, sought another vessel, possibly a wheat-ship, which was sailing from Alexandria to the capital. They set forth again, therefore, under a new captain with whom Paul, pretty experienced by now in the moods of the eastern Mediterranean, soon had some lively arguments. From the outset, sailing was slow. Clinging to the coast, they passed the island of Cnidus, and this with difficulty, despite the shelter, and it took them many days to reach Crete, a distance of under two hundred miles. If many days meant a week this was a net navigation of only

a mile or two an hour and there is a certain delightful romance in the picture of this little cockleshell of a boat, drifting hither and thither as the wind veered from one point to another point of the compass, as if no one cared what happened to such an infinitesimal fragment of wood and canvas, while behind the bulwarks breathed the noblest and greatest of men then living. Some leaders, conscious of failing years, might have become impatient over the delays, first of the law and then of the barometer. But Paul had learnt to regard all these things with content of mind, because he was able, by such chances, to show in fresh ways what help comes from God's grace. He knew that his time spent at sea was worth while. Christ also had spent much time at sea. Wherever in this world of industry men and women have to rough it, be it on land or water, in schooner or lumber camp, there must the love of Our Lord be brought home by His disciples. As Christ was Carpenter and Fisherman, so was Paul a tent-maker and an emigrant.

At last they found anchorage at Lasea, in Crete, where was a harbour called " the Fair Havens." It was now October and winter was setting in. It is curious that Luke still reckoned the date by " the fast "—the great day of atonement, and one can imagine how they thought of the Temple,—its gorgeous and ancient ceremonial—and the high priest, by whose order Paul had been struck in the mouth, entering through the veil, just rent in twain, —entering the Holy of Holies. Whoever wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, no reasonable person has denied that it embodies much of Paul's thought.

To Jerusalem, he had said good-bye forever. Consulting with Luke about Our Lord's prophecies, he knew that Jerusalem must be swept away. So swept away were other temples,—Ephesus, for instance. But, at Ephesus, Paganism produced no Paul to perpetuate her worship forever as the type and shadow of eternal reality.

This ship bound for Rome had been commandeered by Julius the centurion, who therefore could decide whether she was able safely to proceed on her course. Paul did not hesitate to give his opinion. He held that the vessel and cargo would be lost and lives endangered if the winter were risked. Neither the captain nor the centurion resented the admonition—they liked its outspoken advice. But they thought that they knew better. The captain was also ship-owner. He wanted his profit on the lading. He was ready for a gamble. Nor was he deterred by the peril to other lives than his own. He was an employer who neglected safety appliances. He had no life-belts and only one life-boat on board. His motive was commerce and where the telescope pointed to prudence, to the fear of God, which is the beginning even of industrial wisdom, he applied his blind eye.

Crew and passengers joined in the discussion. You had the united wisdom of a soldier's and workman's council. The ship was governed with the sagacity of a Soviet and, against Paul, there was a clear majority. What they felt was that Lasea was an unpleasant place in which to winter. Amenities were lacking. If only they could sail as far as Phœnice, without tempting the open sea, they would have a much better time. It was not a great

distance away. At this compromise, captain and crew arrived—labour and capital thus avoided a mutiny—and the only thing omitted from calculation was the wisdom of Christ. That they discounted. They did not believe that He had ever ruled the winds and the waves. They ignored His miracles. And it did not occur to them that they were heading straight for a collapse of society. What Paul realized was that the happiness of these men depended, not upon a new harbour around them, but upon a new spirit within them.

For the trouble was that they never reached Phœnice. They left the old harbour—broke up the old *régime*—but could not make a new one. The ship was full of Bolshevists who asked in vain for socialism—of Protectionists who wanted higher tariffs—of Free Traders who wanted no tariffs at all—while the one man who relished life as it was happened to be Paul, a Christian. He had no wish to spend his whole life in " the Fair Havens " near Lasea. He was no static thinker—no mid-Victorian, reclining on antimacassars. But he had that in him which lifted him clean above environment and helped him to make life worth while under whatever system he laboured.

They loosed from Lasea. They clung to Crete. The south wind blew softly. Men's opinions were reasonably uttered—reform was to be gradual and cautious—politics were to be placid—when suddenly these statesmen of a Mediterranean rowing boat discovered that theirs was not the whole world —not even an important part of it—for beyond their mental horizon there were climatic depressions, stirrings of violent tempest, the distant birth

of a hurricane called Euroclydon, or tornado. What you and I are thinking is important. But the real question is what the Chinaman and the Hindu and the Negro are thinking—what the Russians are thinking and the vast underworld of voiceless industry. On that ship, with its society of souls, descended the tempestuous wind. A few tried to resist the upheaval, but resistance was soon found to be vain. Before so fierce "a tendency," they had to let her drive—fling concessions to all who demanded them, and trust to luck. Navigation was as helpless as national policy when revolution is afoot and it was a mere chance that brought them under the shelter of Clauda, a little island, useless as a refuge, because of quicksands and an exposed situation. Then was it that they made a last attempt to save the vessel. They bound her up with ropes. They strake sail. All the glory of seamanship was abandoned. It was as if some ancient tyranny, threatened with rebellion, abolished its pomps, cut down its imperial ambitions, abridged its expenditure, and endeavoured thus to face the storm. But that was not enough. Next day, the cargo had to be thrown overboard. Men sold their estates or left them derelict. Millionaires submitted to crushing taxation. Pictures and jewelry were sold at auction. The very tackling of the vessel,—the instruments of manufacture and transport—were sacrificed. With their own hands, the workers cast out unconsecrated plant. Investments became worthless. Exchange declined. Credit was destroyed and Euroclydon continued.

Men looked vainly for the moon or the stars to guide them. But for many days the sky was ob-

scured by the driving clouds. Amid the passions of that cyclone no fixed principle was discernible—nothing by which society could be safely steered. Gradually there spread over the ship's company a terrible pessimism. None of us, they thought, is likely to be saved. Hunger settled upon them and with hunger came gaunt despair. And during this fearful strain and stress, Paul proved to be an excellent sailor. Others might refuse to eat, but he retained his appetite. Others might lose their sleep, but he had pleasant dreams and awoke in cheerful spirits. After a fortnight of it, he was the only man of them all who was good for anything. Any college would have welcomed him. In any club he would have been a favourite. And, however fierce the storm, there was nothing in his cargo that he had to throw overboard.

Between Paul the apostle and Jonah the prophet there may be drawn, perhaps, an interesting contrast. Both men knew God and desired to serve Him. Both men were sent as missionaries to a mighty city, governed by a great emperor. Both men went to sea. Amid the tempest, both men slept. Born of the same race, professing the same creed, where these men differed was in their consecration, their obedience. If Paul had been asked *what is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?* he would have had no difficulty in making answer. Every one around him knew that he was in precisely the place that he ought to be, and every one around Jonah knew the exact opposite. With the world in upheaval, where are the disciples of Christ to-day? Are they fleeing from the presence of the Lord, or

do they meet the angel of God, whose they are and whom they ought to serve? Jonah was thrown overboard. The sailors, like the politicians, disestablished his church. To them it was an actual addition to peril, an aggravation of feudal ownership, a hated citadel of privilege and sloth. But Paul could stand forth boldly in the midst of them and receive a welcome hearing.

When Peter was in a boat and the weather was rough, he thought that he must walk on the water or even plunge therein headlong, if he would reach the Master. On seeing the Saviour in the distance, he must, as it were, escape from his circumstances somehow, whether by miracle or by management. Get out of this business, he would say, and Christ is possible. Paul had learnt better than that. Rats might desert a sinking ship, but not he. It was in the ship that Christ spoke to him. It was amid the howling of the hurricane that he understood most clearly what he had been taught by Isaiah—*But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* The angel, who spoke to him, had to teach no new lesson. His message was what children call recapitulation. The background of the whole business was Paul's solid knowledge of and reverence for the Old Testament. *I believe God,* he said, *that it shall be even as it was told me.*

For let us make no mistake—it was not to the

centurion, as representing the state, not to the captain of the ship, as representing commerce, that the Almighty committed at this time the secret of social safety. While they were thinking only of the ship,—her sails and her cargo, the soundings and the anchors,—the system by which communities must be piloted into harbour,—Paul knew that the ship was lost, that property must inevitably disappear in the upheaval, and what he thought about therefore was the men and women themselves, their character, their ability cheerfully to work and suffer for one another, and their physique. If Paul had been a Jacobin or a Bolshevist, he would have started at once a mutiny against the captain of the ship and the centurion. Instead of that he insisted that the crew and passengers should remain in the ship,—that they should make every possible use of existing conditions until these conditions collapsed of themselves—when probably they would find an island near by, a new era ready for them, whither some of them could swim by their own efforts, and others, with the help of boards and broken pieces of the vessel. It was Paul's close study of the way in which Christ used the laws and customs of Moses as helps whereby men might find His grace and atonement, which gave him the practical wisdom that resulted in all on this ship being saved.

For Christ was eternal. He measured the value both of the old and of the new. He did not desert the old or destroy it. He fulfilled the old, made the utmost use of whatever in the old was still useful. At His feast, there was no broken crumb of the living bread, however stale, that was allowed to be

wasted. Here on this storm-tossed ship was a boat. That boat meant severance from the main vessel. It meant the salvation of one class, the sailors, who crowded into it. They thought that such safety by selfishness was possible. Paul told them the opposite. No class, not even miners or railwaymen, has ever been saved except by remaining loyal to the community. There is no redemption or uplift for anybody which does not include everybody. There is no divine love, except for the whole world.

Paul was the accused prisoner, bound for criminal judgment, yet here he was in command of the vessel. Character is, after all, what tells in public life. Slowly but surely they had to recognize his authority. At first, when he told them to be of good cheer, they busied themselves over the soundings, got into a panic as they heard the surf beating on the rocks, and cried out uselessly for the day. To Paul, as to Christ, the night was as gloriously illuminated with the presence of God as the most brilliant sunshine, and he was ready, therefore, courageously to anticipate the dawn. For around him a reign of terror was setting in. While the sailors had thought of abandoning the women and children, the soldiers muttered that the prisoners must be massacred lest they escape. Paul calmly assured them all that, however violent the anarchy, not one hair on any head need be injured. It is the passion of man, not the providence of God, that fills the streets with machine guns at one end, mutilating mobs at the other. For these sorrows there is no elemental necessity.

The ship was tossing about. Wind roared

through her rent rigging. The ropes that undergirded her sides strained and stressed as she was buffeted. But Paul did the simplest deed imaginable by man. He took a loaf of bread. Centurion and captain and crew and convicts had not understood for one instant that the source of their tremors was largely malnutrition. It is, probably, a fact that no country has ever been visited by revolution in which the people have eaten what doctors regard as sufficient food. Not elaborate food, but sufficient—bread—the loaf—shared by all. In that vessel there was ample food. Yet the people were starving. They were not taught how to eat properly and in a manner that makes for health. Paul had himself to show them—two hundred, threescore and sixteen souls. In that united sacrament, all distinctions were obliterated. Accuser and accused, escort and prisoners, captain and crew, were reduced to one spiritual commonwealth.

For Paul gave thanks. Amid those dangers and discomforts he was grateful. With the tempest howling around him, he was still in a Father's home. Accompanied by heathen, his breakfast was a sacrament. His policy was not to govern but to inspire, not to command but to consecrate, and, at his word, with the ship actually breaking up and perils increasing, they were yet of good cheer. They ate enough. And what could not be eaten they threw overboard. A clear line was drawn between wheat for food and wheat for profit. Of the latter the ship was lightened.

So did they spend the long hours of darkness. At last the day dawned. They knew not what was

the land but they were ready for any little creek. All they could do was loose the rudder-bands, let the ship steer herself, hoist the mainsail, and trust to the good care of the Almighty. In that dreadful predicament there was now a certain confidence among them all. Discipline was restored and the centurion, who had learnt Paul's value, would not allow the prisoners to be killed. A startling social transition was impending. But it was manageable by orderly methods. All were faithfully to do their part. Those who could swim must swim. The workers must not throw up their jobs. But for others there were boards and broken pieces that still floated. Society might fall apart but souls were safe. They all got to land.

And what did they find? Utopia? A social paradise? Not at all. Why, said they, this is just Malta! Some of them doubtless had been to Malta many times before. About Malta there was nothing revolutionary. Indeed it was raining hard. The weather was singularly familiar. It was also cold. Both barometer and thermometer were entirely indifferent to new eras. After all the tumults, men and women were left, as usual, with earth beneath and sky above.

The Maltese were barbarians—utterly old-fashioned folk—who had read none of the latest books, imbibed none of the cynicism and satire of modern novelists, but believed still in reconstructing society on a basis of personal kindness. Fire, they said, is the first thing, plenty of coal and wood—cheap coal—generously hewed. Their idea of brotherhood meant work, mutual service, pity, helpfulness. What gave them this idea was the example of their

chief man, Publius, who set a high standard of hospitality, showing how much of the success of the commonwealth depends upon the conduct of a president or a prime minister. In Malta the feudal system was at its best, and the courtesy of these simple folk, their delight at receiving strangers, the attentions with which they loaded their guests, all showed that deep within the hearts of men, if only hearts can be touched, are the seeds of what Christ meant by brotherly love. It is pleasant to contrast the paganism of Malta with the piety of Jerusalem.

When they suggested that the first thing to do was to kindle a fire, Paul entered into the picnic with his usual zest and gathered whatever appeared as a stick to his imperfect vision. The fact that there were snakes in the grass had never deterred him from any enterprise, for that man will make nothing at all who fears making mistakes. When a viper fastened on his hand, they concluded at once that he must have committed murder. By the same argument the father of Publius, their squire or laird, must also have been a great malefactor since he was poisoned by the germs of a serious fever. Paul was thus confronted by the same situation with which Christ had to deal, namely, a common belief that sickness is sin without hope either of healing or of salvation. How he dealt with the two cases is interesting. With immediate presence of mind, he held the viper over the fire, which forced the reptile to relax its grip without tearing the flesh while bringing the heat to bear upon whatever venom had reached the hand. It may have cost him no little pain, but the hand was healed and the life was preserved. On the one hand, Paul

was armed with a promise that in doing Christ's work he should be immune from dangerous reptiles until the work was done, and on the other hand he obeyed Christ's command that if thy hand offend thee, cut it off. In exposing his arm to the flame, possibly by the advice of Luke the physician, Paul laid the foundation of modern surgery.

Anæsthetics came later. In Paul's intense sympathy with the sick,—for instance, Timothy and Epaphroditus and Trophimus—the apostle anticipated even these merciful expedients. For three months the apostle played the part of medical missionary. Of Luke's assistance not a word is said. Every good result is attributed to the prayers of God's ambassador. He laid his hands on the father of Publius, who recovered, and when at last the little party left the island the inhabitants could not sufficiently show their sense of indebtedness. Of Malta we do not again hear anything. But from that day onward there must have been in that island a society of Christians. Not a soldier, not a seaman who touches at the mighty fortress which has since arisen can avoid the story of Paul's heroism. Even at Crete, where the apostle was anchored for a much briefer period than the three months which he spent at Malta, a church arose to supervise which he sent his younger friend Titus, with a warning that he would find the people singularly indifferent to truth! Wherever Paul went it seemed as if the Cause took root.

Two ships had failed to bring the apostle to Rome, but a third was lying there in harbour, having wintered in the island. Its sign was Castor and Pollux, and there is a certain irony in the spectacle

of Paul the apostle proceeding to the imperial city under the auspices of these well-meaning, yet somewhat obsolete tutelary deities. Yet they are mentioned with all respect. Even an imperfect recognition of the unseen is better than none at all. A petition to Castor and Pollux is at least less blasphemous than the conduct of passengers who brave the ocean without one hint whether on Sunday or week-day that they owe their safety on land and water to a Providence beyond themselves. After patient navigation they reached Syracuse, in Sicily, and so proceeded to Rhegium, thence sailing onward under the very shadow of Mount Vesuvius, in the bosom of which volcano there was already pent up the fire and the brimstone that were to overwhelm Drusilla, wife of Felix, who sat by her trembling husband's side as Paul argued about righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come. So ended Paul's voyage.

XXXVI

PAUL WINS THE RACE

IN telling the unfinished story of Paul's residence at Rome, I must confine myself strictly to the materials which any one may discover for himself in the Acts and the later Epistles. Those buildings of which we still admire the mere ruins adorned the imperial city with a glory that made but little impression upon the apostle and his companions. Whether it be that he was kept by his chain in one rented house or that his physical eyesight was now very dim, I cannot say, but the fact is plain that in his letters, written from Rome,—even the most intimate of them to Timothy—he ignores the palaces and the temples, the tramp of the garrison and the pomp of the Emperor's court, and devotes himself entirely to what was going on in men's hearts, to the circumstances of an escaped slave like Onesimus, to the care of the churches, not as edifices, for there were none, but as societies of living, laughing, sorrowing, rejoicing brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul's attitude towards the magnificence of Roman architecture curiously resembled the mind of Our Lord when He said that of the huge stones on which rested the Temple at Jerusalem, not one would lie upon another since all would be thrown down. No church—no synagogue—no capitol is safe which has become ir-

relevant to human happiness. It was not in the forum that Roman history was proceeding mainly, but in Paul's private dwelling. And in the other houses, like that of Aquila and Priscilla, where the disciples of the forward-looking Saviour used to assemble.

Many great and delightful books have been written about the sights and sounds which greeted Paul on his arrival, but my object is not archæology. What concerns us here is the fact that Puteoli is only mentioned at all because the brethren were found there, who begged Paul to stay with them for seven days. So far as we are told, no apostle—no evangelist had preached the Gospel in Puteoli, yet here, as in Tyre and other places, the fire had been kindled, one might almost say by spontaneous combustion, through men, whose very names are forgotten, finding in Christ's Cause a career, unrecognized by the press but of an absorbing fascination to the individual. Here indeed there was a catholic apostolic church, best described, however, as universal, as missionary, as a society. In paraphrase, we get at the meaning.

That Julius the centurion should have allowed Paul thus to spend seven days in Puteoli is a last evidence of the apostle's commanding personality. *And so*, writes Luke with a touch of pride—*And so we went towards Rome.* If Christ entered Jerusalem as King, destined to die, so with a royal dignity did His Ambassador approach the enthroned Cæsar, to whom he was accredited. But the day came when Puteoli itself had to be left behind. A splendid highway stretched towards Rome. All manner of vehicles passed the little knot of guarded and

manacled prisoners. The very slaves enjoyed a liberty that was denied to these sad wayfarers. But at least there was that in Paul's situation which made him happier than Our Saviour had been when all forsook Him and fled. Marching at his side, mile after mile, were Luke and other friends, and from Rome herself came forth to welcome him many brethren who had heard of his approach. There indeed was a reception that contrasted with the timidity of Jerusalem. Strike down Paul and Rome must understand that there would be others left. When Paul saw these Christians, *he thanked God and took courage.* For here in very truth was a Church, founded by no man, whether Peter or another, governed by no Pope, in which no mention is made of Cardinal, Patriarch or Bishop,—a Church whose one foundation was Jesus Christ the Lord—a Church that was His new creation—by water and the Word. No wonder that at the Three Taverns Paul's heart leapt within him.

Arriving at last in Rome, he bade farewell to Julius the centurion, who handed him over to the captain of the guard. Recognizing that all things work together for good to them that love God, Paul had devoted infinite care to his conduct towards the pagans whom he met, with this result, that Julius put in a plea for his generous treatment. The storm, the shipwreck, the viper at Malta and the illness of the father of Publius were affairs not obviously related to house property in Rome, yet taken in combination, they secured for the apostle what was nothing less than an Embassy, where he could receive his friends and whence he could send forth dispatches. That hired house was a place

where Paul the missionary was always to be found. Hitherto he had gone forth to others. Now others had to come to him. And never in his long life did he spend his time to better advantage than here, chained to a soldier in Rome. As he told the Philippians, it actually assisted the good news. In the law courts, everybody talked about the appeal. Because Paul was chained, the other disciples became the more bold. His courage infected them.

Not that we must suppose that even in Rome the disciples were unanimous for the free and democratic view of human life which Paul proclaimed. Some years earlier he had written to the Romans that masterly letter in which he shows that law, compulsion, order, authority, punishment, are not enough to save men's souls. In Jerusalem the law was religious; in Rome it was political; but, in either event, the law only teaches us our need of love, of pardon, of help, which blessings are to be found nowhere save in the life and the death of Christ. In his epistle to the Romans he is careful to tell the disciples that civil authority must be respected, that taxes must be paid and that just debts must not be left owing. And, having thus dealt with secular law, Paul now summoned the chief of the Jews and formally submitted himself to the religious claims of the ancient people, and to observance of Mosaic rites. In Rome the Jews were unpopular and had already been once expelled. Slowly but surely, the troubles were rolling up which would culminate in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, and in the scattering of Israel as a nation. The status of Paul as a prisoner was that of Roman citizen, and after his treatment by the

Jews he owed nothing, so one would have thought, to their rabbis. But his was a nature incapable of malice or revenge. Driven from an arrogant Mount Zion, he associated himself with Zionists in distress, many of whom had been already maltreated. There was no necessity for him so to do. They had received no accusation against him. Yet, from morning till night, he reasoned with them about the Messiah. They agreed that the Faith was by this time a fact everywhere spoken against and a fact thus to be reckoned with. By the word *everywhere* the Jews meant all places where they themselves met. They insisted still in arguing about Jesus of Nazareth only with one another. To the world at large they denied a hearing. What Julius the centurion thought was not evidence. And from the synagogue, therefore, the Cloud and the Fire passed like a pillar and stood over the house where Paul dwelt. Before the Jews left him, Paul hurled at them with crushing force a thrice quoted saying of Isaiah, who—with intimate knowledge of national psychology—told how, hearing, they would not understand,—seeing, they would not perceive—deaf and blind, they would not be healed.

It was, indeed, a strange and tragic scene—this final leave-taking between Paul and the children of Israel. Luke tells how they parted, at dead of night, weary with long contention, and yet how the rabbis went on discussing the business, out in the street, with all the animation of their keen-witted intelligence. Some of them agreed with Paul as to Jesus the Christ, but like the Galatians and Judean Israelites, they wanted Christ to them-

selves, and within the Church there thus arose a certain now familiar contention. In former years this perhaps would have been denounced by Paul. *Henceforth*, wrote he to Galatia, *let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.* But that was before his great renunciation. He had not then lived for years with chains on his wrists. He was now in a very different mood. He knew that they who troubled the Church desired to add affliction to his bonds, but, with a touch of actual gaiety, which reappears as a pun in the letter to Philemon, he remarks, *What then? Notwithstanding all this,—every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.* What tons of acrimonious controversy would have been avoided in the Church if the faithful had realized that in pretense, as well as in truth, Christ may be preached!

Each day as it came was fully employed. Paul developed a large correspondence and, happily for us, a few of his best letters survive. In one case there came from Philippi a friend called Epaphroditus, bringing a gift of money, which doubtless helped Paul with his rent and anyway touched him to the heart. Unfortunately, as it seemed, Epaphroditus fell dangerously sick—indeed, he ought not to have travelled at all—his only reason being that money which Paul needed was waiting at Philippi, with nobody else to bring it. Paul sent him back with one of the tenderest letters of thanks ever put upon paper. His gratitude was the more abundant because the sickness of Epaphroditus was already known in Philippi, where, possibly, there were those who said—"We told you so—he ought

never to have started!" Yet if Epaphroditus had not started, we should have lost three immortal pages of the New Testament.

Stranger still was the sudden appearance in Paul's house of a runaway slave. His name was Onesimus, and he had travelled all the way from Colosse in Asia Minor, with money stolen from his master, Philemon, who was a Christian and a valued friend of Paul. Having thus absconded, one would have thought that Onesimus, finding himself in Rome, would have taken good care to avoid the apostle, who at once must detect his crime. Moreover, a private interview was impossible owing to the presence of soldiers in Paul's room. But Onesimus knew how Christians regarded their slaves and he made a clean breast of his whole offense. Now arose the question what Paul ought to do. During his own journey to Rome, he had been allowed every possible opportunity to escape. Though the victim of gross injustice, and threatened with violent death, he had resumed and still wore the chain. He did not attempt to justify the action of Onesimus, and for a simple reason,—the man himself had an uneasy conscience. Paul the prisoner, therefore, sent back Onesimus the slave to Philemon.

Obviously, there was no reason why Onesimus should have gone. Paul might give him Tychicus as companion but he had no power to appoint an escort. Onesimus had, however, been first won for Christ and in Christ he took upon himself the form of a servant. Submitting to social injustice, he was happier than he had been when rebelling against it. Philemon, who had become to him a grievance,

was now an accepted duty and, in fulfilling that duty, Onesimus became Paul's faithful and beloved brother, indeed his messenger with Tychicus to the entire Colossian Church.

To the submission of Onesimus, and his return with Tychicus, we owe three letters—to the Ephesians, the Colossians and to Philemon himself. But, instructive as is that providence, what impresses one most of all is the statesmanship with which Paul handled this difficult problem of slavery. By harbouring Onesimus, he would have invited every bondservant in the Roman Empire, there and then, to rebel against industrial conditions, which were often intolerable. He would have declared a general strike which would have paralyzed commerce, provoked unbounded bloodshed and caused infinite want and hunger. His alternative policy was to teach Philemon the hitherto unknown value of the man he employed as a slave, his dignity as one for whom Christ died, and his place in the Church. Also, he told all the other disciples in Colosse that Onesimus was Paul's brother in Christ and that the writ of servitude does not run near God's altar.

In this incident we see a Christian leader, who has himself laid down his life for the One Lord, successfully drawing together employer and employed, and so reuniting the broken solidarity of nations. He ordains that a liberated workman, with high ideals, is of far greater value to the master than an underpaid, discontented and degraded operative. His remedy for strikes, which he neither advocates nor defends, is the constraining love of the Redeemer, known by both parties to

the dispute, which transcends all financial considerations and must impel men to grant to one another even more than what strict justice demands. Lastly, he meets the legitimate ambition of Onesimus by offering him, outside his daily work, an illimitable field in the Church, for service and sacrifice and achievement.

Whether Paul was released for a time and then travelled again until he was once more arrested, is a question almost certainly to be answered in the affirmative. It shows that he had no intention of making Rome a Church with ecclesiastical primacy. But for our purpose here, his first and second imprisonments under Cæsar were parts of the same drama that ended in his death. At first he was surrounded by friends, but, one by one, they left him. To Philippi, as we have seen, went Epaphroditus, and to Colosse went Onesimus and Tychicus. Even Timothy, who helped him with his letters to Philemon, Philippi and Colosse, could not be spared from the work at Ephesus, whither Paul sent him, afterwards dispatching to him two letters, of which the latter certainly was written from Rome. One man, Demas, was a faithful fellow labourer until his courage failed and, loving this present world, he deserted. Apparently Epaphras, the Colossian, and Aristarchus, the Macedonian, lived with Paul in his house, for he calls them in his playful way his fellow-prisoners. Yet even they have vanished when the end drew on. *Only Luke is with me*, wrote Paul to Timothy—only Luke. Crescens had departed for Galatia. Titus was off to Dalmatia and would take up work in Crete. Mark was with Timothy in Ephesus and in sending for Timothy,

Paul, sensitive to the last where he had once given pain, begged him to bring this now seasoned soldier of the Cross.

No one can say whether Timothy, who was Paul's own son in the faith, arrived in time. To Philippi, Paul had spoken of his trial with exuberant rejoicing—to be with Christ would be far better—but years had passed under the shadow of Nero's murderous mania; at his first hearing, no one had stood with Paul, and from Ephesus, Alexander the coppersmith had arrived, a damning witness, with his own account of the riot there. Paul was reprieved, but with difficulty, as if he had been delivered from the mouth of a lion. By this time it was hard fighting—it was fighting the good fight,—it was finishing the straight course—it was keeping the faith.

Only Luke was with him, and how did they spend their time? If I am to reject all tradition, I must leave the picture blank, but otherwise I see two men, one old and chained, while the other is younger. He holds the pen and together they compose the Gentile's Gospel of Christ,—the Gospel which shows that if He were the son of Abraham and David, He was also the son of Adam and of God,—the Gospel of Luke. That goes forth to the world, and a second book is begun, written also to Theophilus, in similar style to the first, telling of the Church, of Stephen,—how well Paul knew his apology!—of Barnabas, of Peter, of Paul himself. Gradually the narrative becomes more graphic—Luke himself was eye-witness—could write in the first person—could give actual reminiscences. He brings Paul to Malta, to Syracuse, to

Puteoli, to Rome, to the hired house. He tells of the two years there spent and he is just going to tell something more, what happened next, when suddenly, grimly, something stops him. The pen is swept from his hand. The page is left unfinished. It is as if the sword of Damocles had cut the thread of placid narration.

For there came a day when hearts stood still as the measured tread of soldiers was heard in the street. Paul must arise and Luke must be left by himself. He wrote nothing further. And if he wrote nothing, it was because he could not. Many of the early Christians died a martyr's death, but Foxe's Book of Martyrs came much later. There were atrocities perpetrated, but no mongering of them. It was the Spain of a decadent age that lived on the lurid horrors of an anatomical art. For the stones which slew Stephen are mentioned merely as a fact and the murder of James is told in a sentence. To Paul, death was "a light affliction but for a moment" and in one of his last letters he wrote, *Whatsoever things are lovely, think on those things.* By discouraging morbid brooding, the disciples set a standard for the heroism which pervades our hospitals. Enough for them that shed blood be remembered before the throne of God. They loved one another too well to make a spectacle of family bereavements.

Here, on this desk, lies that last verse of the Acts—and after it comes the rest of the page, white as snow and strangely silent. Paul gone—and Luke left. How could Luke continue his task? Paul gone—and *only* Luke left,—Luke all by himself.

And to-day in New York and in London, the two mightiest cities of the world, the churches that are most historic, where Washington worshipped, where Wellington and Nelson are buried, have been dedicated, both of them, to Paul. Still does his liberal spirit reconcile old and new in one brotherhood—Barbarian, Scythian, Bond and Free. Yet, as one bids him good-bye, it is not what he did, but what he was—so brave, so loyal, so rich in faith and humour—that leads one to understand why Luke's indelible ink changed in a moment to invisible tears.

XXXVII

THE TRIUMPH OF PETER

IN reading the published correspondence of the early Christians, I am struck, first, by amazement that these letters should have been written at all, and secondly, that when written, they should have been so widely popular. Reckoning the Epistle to the Hebrews, there are twenty-one of these documents, and if one takes any ordinary Sunday newspaper, intended for the delectation of mankind, or the usual modern novel or even biography, and compares these with, let us say, the half dozen pages which Peter has left us, one appreciates how astonishing is the difference made in men's minds by whatever it is that we call Christian piety. The Epistle to the Hebrews is, strictly speaking, not an epistle at all but a treatise, and as such it should be considered apart. And possibly this comment also applies to the first Epistle of John. But the other nineteen letters are correctly described as such. They are written with an artless ease which gives one the idea that a man is talking to his friends, freely and familiarly; and, in reading, you are carried on from sentence to sentence, from one idea to the next, without effort or pause. Not only was Paul a discursive writer, which often happens when a man dictates his thoughts to an amanuensis, but he was often in-

terrupted, and—as in his Epistle to the Corinthians—he would start afresh what he was trying to say. It seems to me that any attempt to reduce these letters to the orderly sequence of a theological code must fail. It is true enough that commentators have fully established the masterly exactitude of the language often employed. But if God had wished to give us, through the early Christians, the creeds and the catechisms and the articles of religion which holy men have since developed, He would surely have used a more suitable literary vehicle. The value of the letters lies, indeed, precisely in this fact that they were the inspiration of a moment, the very conversation of God to man and not man's elaborate conception of what he means by God. Therefore I take these Scriptures, exactly as God gave them, as cheerful, sensible and often warning notes, signed Paul, or Peter, or Jude, or John, or James, and dropped into the mail box for me, many hundred years ago, in order that I might learn of God, not as an abstract divinity but as the Friend and Tenant of a good man's heart.

It is because I am interested in Peter himself that I like to read his final writings. For years this apostle has disappeared from our view. We saw him last at Antioch, still a man of impetuous judgment, uncertain in conduct, afraid of Jewish hostility and therefore nervous of missionary enterprise among the Gentiles. Owing to faults of temper, he has lost the leadership of the Church. It is upon Paul that the limelight is concentrated. Now open his two epistles and you discover a serene breadth of vision which at first you can scarcely explain. What is it that has made Peter

so much greater in retirement than ever he was when he stood in the forefront of affairs? He himself answers the question. Behind the scenes he has been giving all diligence to his own personal life with Christ. Beginning with faith, he has added unto it virtue or manliness, a readiness to stand out against public opinion, an indifference to suffering and pain. To manliness he has added knowledge, a closer acquaintance with the actual problems which Gentiles, like Jews, have to face,—that knowledge which is the basis of all right judgment. Next he has added temperance, or self-restraint, and to self-restraint he has added patience, which means the long suffering of circumstances. So has there developed in him by sure stages a certain godliness, or likeness to the Eternal which is revealed, first in an unexpected brotherly kindness and finally in a love which embraces the whole world. It is that diligent education which has changed the Peter of Palestine into the Peter of the epistles. From him we learn that Christian devotions are not the mechanical telling of beads or the winding of a Tibetan prayer-wheel but a reasoned, conscious, intelligent growth of a noble and a reliable character. It is what he calls the abundant entrance of men and women into the Kingdom of God.

In earlier years Peter had worked miracles, but of these he says not a syllable. His one chief reminiscence is of Christ's Glory on the Mount which overshadows every other. Apart from this single allusion he does not even claim that especial status which had been so dear to him, namely, the prestige of witness to the earthly life of Christ.

Where he might have boasted of those memories, he lays them aside. No longer does he talk of a historic Christ but of that still more glorious Being Whom, having not seen, we love. So humble had Peter become that he exalted a later generation of disciples over his own. Sincere as had been his love for the Redeemer, he praised theirs more highly. He did not discourage, or as we should put it, snub them because of their new ways of showing their devotion to the one Master. He was an evangelical who desired social justice—a Bible student who valued natural science—a sabbatarian who recognized the right of the people to reasonable amusement. Christ had changed Peter's static mind into an instrument of ordered progress.

Similar to all this is Peter's new attitude towards Jew and Gentile, east and west, French and Germans,—to all racial and religious antagonisms. It seems as if he had climbed out of some narrow valley where he and his forebears had lived all their lives and now stood upon the crest of a mountain where he surveyed the world with frontiers obliterated under the warm radiance of Christ's universal care for mankind. It is true that the first letter is addressed to the Jews of the dispersion, but its sequel is offered without restriction to all in every land and every age who share with Peter the faith which he has found to be so precious. Paul himself has not outlined the privileges of the humblest disciples in terms more glowing than the words of Peter. You and I are chosen not by descent from Abraham, whom Peter no longer mentions, but by the foreknowledge of God the Father. We have an inheritance, reserved for us

in no earthly land however venerable, but in the everlasting regions of happiness. It is no temple offering or sacrifice that has redeemed us but the precious blood of Christ. In Him are we a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. It is He and He alone Who calleth out of darkness into light. Of circumcision and the law, about which Peter used to argue so hotly, he now says scarcely a word. He who had been the narrowest of patriots, the proudest of Spanish Grandees, the strictest of Brahmins, is now a friend and champion of men and women who became strangers or outcasts for Christ's sake.

Here then we see Peter, a Jew, like Paul, the Jew, sharing his birthright with the Gentile. What that meant we can best realize by imagining the sensation which would arise if the Pope of Rome were suddenly to issue an encyclical, not asserting the claims and privileges of the Vatican, but declaring the fullness of the grace, the splendour of the gifts that have been granted in Christ to the Society of Friends. Conversely, let us suppose that the Presbyterian Church of Ulster or the Wee Frees of Scotland were to publish in the press a manifesto setting forth the triumphs of reverence and sacrifice which have been accomplished in Christ by members of the Catholic Communion. What surprise there would be! Yet nothing less than that was the achievement of Simon Peter. He was not content to suggest that the faith of other disciples might ultimately prove to be in the pardoning providence of God a pale reflection of his own. In extolling that faith, he exhausted the wealth of his vocabulary.

One might have assumed that Peter would have said something about his alleged position as the rock on which would be built the Christian Church. He does indeed mention the living stone, disallowed of men but chosen of God and precious. He refers to the stone which is made the head of the corner. Here if anywhere was his opportunity of reminding the disciples of what Jesus had said on that day which preceded the Transfiguration. In fact, as we have seen, Peter mentions the Transfiguration. But he recognizes no corner-stone for the Church save Christ alone. Where Christ had told him to feed the Church of God, he bids the disciples to return direct to Christ, as the only Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. He will admit no other head of the Church, whether royal or ecclesiastical, save Our Lord Himself. No disciple is to become a lord over the flock, assuming a title or dignity, but every follower of the Master is to be content to live as His example, in lowliness of mind, showing to others what He was. Though an apostle and witness of Christ's sufferings, Peter, like John, deliberately wrote to the elders of the Church as one who was also an elder—no more than an elder—and it was to other elders as colleagues and equals that he handed on, undiminished in its authority, Christ's command that he should tend His sheep. Peter who once stood forth so boldly in the midst of the Church, ended his career as the noblest exponent of ecclesiastical modesty. Doubtless he calls himself Peter, but in the second of his epistles he is careful to include his earlier name, Simon. He knew that Israel the prince never ceased to be Jacob.

That second epistle was Peter's last will and testament. In other days death had been to him a terrible ordeal from which he shrank. He never forgot what he had seen of Christ's suffering on the Cross. In both of his letters suffering is one of his favourite words. Constantly present in his mind was Our Lord's grim forecast that the day would come when Peter himself would be bound, when his hands would be stretched forth in crucifixion and he would be carried where he would not wish to go. Jesus told him that this would only happen when he was old and here at last had old age overtaken him. In the prison at Jerusalem, when he was a younger man, the prophecy may have comforted him, but now it meant in our common parlance that he was up against it. His was a disease that nothing could cure. Ahead of him lay the operation which he could neither escape or survive. To all his friends his sad circumstances were manifest. Yet he refers to his future as simply as a child who puts away his playthings before going to bed. *Shortly*, said he, *I must fold up this my tabernacle*, as the tabernacle in the wilderness was folded up, when the Ark of the Covenant was moved into the promised land. That was how Peter met his final agony.

Peter was once more walking on the water to Christ and the storm raged around him. For himself he had no longer any fear but for the men in the boat he was anxious. Comparison shows that he had many a talk with Jude over the hurricane of error, intellectual and moral, which was sweeping over the new society. Not once were they ever worried about the number of the disciples in the

Church. At first, as leaders of the Church, they had kept statistics, but experience had made them wiser and they now thought only of the character of the faithful. As they looked upon the world in which they lived, they were reminded of the social conditions which came before the flood when men so spent their wealth and energies as to make no provision against the most evident natural dangers on a wide-spreading plain like that of Mesopotamia. They thought of Sodom and Gomorrha, where also the neglect of God meant indifference of the most ordinary precautions in cities built on a bituminous foundation. It seemed to them that if angels may fall through pride and that if prophets like Balaam may be bribed to their ruin, their own neighbours could not escape the inevitable effects of a similar depravity. After such conference, the one with the other, Peter and Jude each wrote their warning, and it is perhaps characteristic of our modern scholarship that we have libraries of books, half of which tell us that Peter copied from Jude while the other half that Jude copied from Peter. And we are then surprised that our exegesis fails to open up the New Testament to ordinary readers. To me the interesting point is that Jude, after such association with Peter, should have closed his letter with the words *now unto Him Who is able to keep you from falling.* It reminds one of that scene on Galilee when Peter was so brave until he looked around and saw how boisterous were the winds and the waves. And Jesus Christ, seeing him about to sink, did then stretch forth His hand and keep him from falling.

XXXVIII

THE BEATIFIC VISION

IT was St. John the Divine who said the last word for the early Church. That he should have been called "the divine" is the more strange because, after the first week or two following Pentecost, we hear not one definite word for sixty years, about where he lived, what he was thinking, and how he was serving the cause. With Peter he went into the Temple at the hour of prayer, but it was Peter who uttered the command of God to the lame man; it was Peter who addressed the Sanhedrin; it was Peter who denounced Ananias and Sapphira; it was Peter who handled the quarrel over circumcision; it was Peter who braved the wrath of Herod and was delivered from prison. Even when Peter slipped out of the leadership of the movement, John did not take his place. It was James, the other son of Zebedee, who became Bishop or Minister of the faithful at Jerusalem and was thus murdered by the king. And he was succeeded by James, the brother of Our Lord. In the home mission, therefore, John was subordinate; nor is he mentioned as a foreign evangelist. Barnabas, and Timothy, and Luke, and Silas, and Mark appear with Paul, and there are many others, but not John. Yet he and he alone is called "the divine."

What was it that John thus achieved? Among the friends of Jesus, he was, perhaps, the youngest. In physique he was a splendid fisher-lad, who could outrun Peter to the empty tomb—whose eyesight was so keen that, in the dim light of dawn, he was able to tell Peter Who it was, standing there on the shore. Blessed with superb health, he lived until he was nearly a hundred, and never was his vision clearer than towards the end, when he saw an open door in heaven itself. If we call him "the divine," it is because we realize that what men are in themselves is more than what they do for others. To be noble is the only true success. As a system, Christ's love and wisdom have yet to be applied but, as a Character, many have made Him their example. St. John the Divine is the first of the long line of men and women, commonly unmentioned in history, who live a usual life, in an unusual manner, bringing into it the quality called piety—a sense of God—a firm conviction that when all the theologians and philosophers and scientists have exhausted their polysyllables, when all the statesmen and generals and admirals have wrecked and ruined and restored human happiness with their stupendous wisdom and folly, there remains for me but one conclusion, that "God is Love."

John was not always thus. His father was a man of means who hired servants. At Jerusalem, he mixed in the most exclusive priestly circles. His mother believed him to be a much more reliable man than Peter and asked that he and his brother James should be the accepted Cardinal Princes of the Church. To these ambitions John responded. Among the apostles he and James were the only

natural orators and Our Saviour, with the delicate irony which I, for one, find so fascinating,—the irony of one who spoke as no other man ever spake—gave them a kind of nickname, Boanerges, the sons of thunder. If a village did not accept the faith, they would play Mahomet's part and call down fire upon it as punishment. In their gospel there was always plenty of hell. If they had commanded the disciples, one knows not quite what excesses might have been committed. John was of the very stuff that makes an honest inquisitor—a pitiless but convinced persecutor. *He that doeth evil,* said he, *hath not seen God. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed, for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.* And again—*if a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar.* No man has ever hit harder than that and any man, thus hitting out, has been born with a dangerous temperament.

What saved John from the fate and cruelty of a Zealot was his first impression of the Saviour. He was with Andrew, the earliest of all the men who, as it were, discovered the Messiah. Listening to the Baptist, he had gained the idea that religion was righteousness, duty, repentance, but in Jesus he saw the Lamb of God, the Sufferer, the One Who when brought to the slaughter renounces power and even speech. When John and Andrew spent their first memorable yet unrevealed evening with Our Lord, not one miracle had been worked—not one parable had been uttered. It was the Christ of common life that captured them. And it is interesting to note that as John left public duty

to James, so did Andrew stand aside for Peter. The brothers who came to Christ first were the brothers who in later years were the readiest to efface themselves.

The jealousy of Peter which was entertained by these brilliantly gifted sons of Zebedee,—their desire to be greatest—did not survive the last supper, when Jesus drew John to Himself and filled him with the knowledge, which for all time to come dominated his being,—that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved. That love was his inheritance and it brought him to the foot of the Cross itself. There stood Mary, Mother of the Crucified,—Maiden, and Wife—the representative woman of the new kingdom, yet weeping. By that time she must have been older than fifty years, and it was to John that she was committed, as Our Saviour's only legacy. How he maintained her, resigning from other and more prominent tasks, we can gather from the obscurity which settles over his personal activities. Only at Patmos does he emerge, and then as an exile.

That Jesus should not have entrusted His Mother to her sons, James and Jude, but to John, who was nearest to Him in His agony, will hardly surprise anybody who considers that it is sympathy, not relationship which often unites a household. Doubtless blood is thicker than water, but blood is not enough. The stranger who believed in her Son was more to the Mother than the brethren who had thought Him insane. And it was through Mary that John worked out that amazing Fourth Gospel, in which, with the most particular details of Our Lord's manhood, he showed the gradual outshining

of His Godhead. In this companionship of adopted son and spiritual foster-mother lies the secret of the tender reticence with which John handles the birth of the Saviour. There were certain matters which, as it were, could only be written by an outsider. And these he left for Matthew and Luke. But—if I were out for contention—I should here remark that I can imagine no stronger implied testimony to what was told by Matthew and Luke than this—that John, writing later than they, after the most intimate access to the facts, and anxious above all else to establish the truth that Jesus had been undoubtedly a man of flesh and blood like ourselves, should have acquiesced in conviction that His only Father was the Eternal God. John had heard Jesus—had seen Him with his eyes—had gazed upon Him—had even held Him with his hands—reclining on His bosom—yet knew Him to be *the Word of life*—which was from the beginning.

All that survives of these disciples is a fragment. From the one bone scholarship seeks to reconstruct the entire skeleton and to clothe it with flesh and blood, or even to show that, given such a bone, no skeleton could ever have existed. I do not know for certain, nor does any one else, and no erudition will ever discover whether St. John the Divine wrote the second letter, attributed to him, and, for the matter of that, the first and the third. But it is at least significant that, of all the epistles, this alone should have been addressed to a lady—to an elect lady—a chosen lady—a princess of faith—a queen of heaven, living on earth as a mother of children and sister to every mother. Other women of the early Church are named—Dorcas and Damaris and

Lydia and Priscilla; this elect lady is universal, the hostess who sets a standard in society, whose children walk in the truth, whose influence is the real bulwark against deceit and error. Was she actually the Mother of Our Lord? She may have been. That is the natural assumption. And John wrote no longer as "an apostle" but as "an elder"—as "your brother and companion in tribulation." In him, as years passed, humility triumphed.

To Gaius also did he write. Was he Gaius, the man of Macedonia and friend of Aristarchus? I do not know. And was this man Gaius of Corinth? Again, who can say? For Gaius is the Greek form of Caius—like Smyth for Smith—and what Smith is in England, what Jones is in Wales, what Murphy is in Ireland and what McAnything is in Scotland, that Caius was in the Roman Empire. John thus wrote to Friend Smith, to wish him good health, to thank him for his loyal assistance, to recommend one Demetrius and to discourage another Diotrephes—child of Zeus—the latest of the Boanerges—who wanted preëminence and was apt to slight an original apostle that was content to be called a mere elder, deacon, local preacher.

For of all the disciples, St. John the Divine, by living the longest, bore the worst brunt of what we call the failure of Christianity. To him, world was world, flesh was flesh, and devil was devil, and neither of the three would change. There was and would continue unto the last to be that among men which was not of the Father—which was contrary to the traditions of home—which was rebellion against brotherhood—and this wickedness had simply to be overcome. Not overcome by

systems and theories and policies, but absolutely overcome, here and now, by the individual,—trodden under foot. When the Church attracted only the few, John was not surprised. The multitude which knew not Christ could scarcely be better acquainted with Christ's followers. If you believe in the Son of God, you have the witness, not in the institutions which surround you, not in parliaments or synods or armies or navies, but in yourself. Apart from the Son of God, there is no life worth living; no eternal life; there is no existence, activity, struggle, strife, rivalry, achievement, but—as for that—the whole world lieth in wickedness. John was not dismayed at this—it was his own assertion.

With a dozen million men and women and children dead of war, massacre, hunger and plague, with scores of millions ruined in body, mind or estate, with vast areas of the earth hitherto reckoned as civilized now reduced to anarchy and chaos, and with no certainty as yet that the vials of wrath are even yet empty whether on land or sea, who of us, fairly facing the facts, can deny that John told and still tells the stern truth? In his case, the marvel is that, with a mind full of the materials for pessimism, he yet remained through it all confident, hopeful, triumphant. From beginning to end of what he wrote, there is no suggestion that Christ's is a losing cause or that John of Patmos is a beaten man. Nor did he despair of civilization. His was not the cry that puts back the clock—back to the Land—the village—the simple life. He believed in the city. He loved the crowded street. He revelled in solemn and stirring music.

He drank deeply at the river of the water which flowed by men's feet. It is not on this closing page that I can so much as outline, however briefly, the splendid and often sombre vistas of human experience which are revealed in the Apocalypse of St. John. That theme—if at all—must be reserved for a future occasion, a fuller treatment. But as I read of those gates, welcoming within the walls of the Holy Jerusalem men and women of all nations, to share one noble life, in the Presence of One Glorious Majesty,—young and old, rich and poor, intermingling freely, without offense—I ask myself where, in all literature, modern or ancient, I shall find a panorama of idealism, outshining with such magnificent detail, yet illuminated by so definite a central principle. It is not that our railroads and aeroplanes and steamships and all the other wonders of our modern civilization are a mistake. This John would never have said. Let them develop. May they be multiplied. If the day is to dawn when the City is to become, like the Church, the Bride of Christ, who would impoverish by one jewel the lustre of her raiment? But the pavilion over her must be love. There must be around her some other virtue than wealth and power and success. In her midst, there must arise a throne which no man occupies and no nation supports,—before which all must bow the knee. That throne is Love—not in the abstract—but in a person—a Person Who has tasted death itself,—a Lamb, slain from the foundations of the world, Whose blood mingles with our own, while we cry, Worthy is He to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and

blessing. The little company of one hundred and twenty lonely people at the old Jerusalem, starting their mission with Peter in the midst, passes forth into secular history, persecuted, perplexed, yet persistent, claiming proudly that their Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Alpha and the Omega in the letters of our language, the beginning and the end of the otherwise incoherent drama, the unknown First and the undiscoverable Last, Whose grace, here and now, is with you all. Amen.

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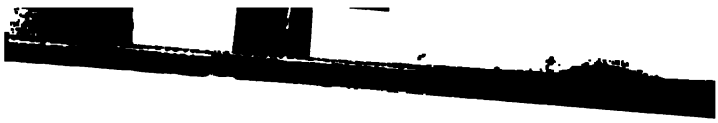

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